DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 345 257 CS 213 314

AUTHOR Klau, Judith R.
TITLE Literature of the Holocaust: The Imagination after Auschwitz. A Course for Juniors and Seniors. A Teacher's Guide.
PUB DATE 86
NOTE 70p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Course Organization; Cultural Context; Curriculum Guides; High Schools; *Jews; Lesson Plans; *Literature Appreciation; *Twentieth Century Literature; Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS *Holocaust; *Holocaust Literature

ABSTRACT

This guide presents a curriculum on the literature of the Holocaust which focuses on the ways in which a particular period in history affected the literature that was created to tell about it. The guide consists of a detailed set of lesson plans for six literary works: a diverse collection of short stories; Elie Wiesel's autobiographical novel, "Night"; Andre Schwarz-Bart's prize-winning novel, "The Last of the Just"; two possible treatments of Anne Frank's diary; Tadeusz Borowski's novel-like collection of short stories, "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen"; and the post-Holocaust work, "Mr. Sammler's Planet" by Saul Bellow. The guide also includes lectures, films, quizzes and writing assignments, introductions and suggestions for the teacher, and supplementary class materials. Two appendixes contain 10 lectures on Germany (1740-1945)--with quiz and text questions--and an article by John Felstiner, "A Biography of a Poem," discussing Paul Celan's poem "Deathfugue." (SR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN **OTHER THAN PAPER COPY** HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Michael J. Gorman
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE
The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: CS
In our judgment, this document is also of interest to the Clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view. SO

ED345257

Literature of the HOLOCAUST

The Imagination after Auschwitz

A Course for Juniors and Seniors

A TEACHER'S GUIDE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

by
Judith R. Klau

English Department Head
Groton School
Groton, Massachusetts

CS213314

Copyright © 1986
The Council for Religion in Independent Schools
P.O. Box 40613
Washington, DC 20016

C I
R S

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Literature of the HOLOCAUST

The Imagination after Auschwitz

A Course for Juniors and Seniors

A TEACHER'S GUIDE

by
Judith R. Klau

English Department Head
Groton School
Groton, Massachusetts

Copyright © 1986
The Council for Religion in Independent Schools
P.O. Box 40613
Washington, DC 20016

Judith R. Klau, formerly of San Francisco University High School, is currently English Department Head at Groton School in Groton, Massachusetts. She welcomes inquiries about teaching her course and may be contacted at the school:

Groton School
Box 991
Groton, MA 01450
(508) 448-3363 or 448-5640

To honor my children's grandparents.

Table of Contents

	Page
Foreword	1
Notes on the Holocaust and Antisemitism	2
Facing History: An Overview	3
Assignments	4
An Introduction to the Course	5
Short Stories: An Introduction to the Teacher	6
Short Stories	
First Assignment	7
Second Assignment	8
Third Assignment	9
Fourth Assignment	10
Night	
First Assignment	11
Second Assignment	12
Third Assignment	13
The Last of the Just	
First Assignment	14
Second Assignment	15
Third Assignment	16
Fourth Assignment	17
Fifth Assignment	18
Sixth Assignment	19
Seventh Assignment	20
Eighth Assignment	21
The Diary of Anne Frank An Introduction to the Teacher	22
The Diary of Anne Frank	23

This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen

First Assignment 26

Second Assignment 28

Third Assignment 29

Fourth Assignment 30

Fifth Assignment 31

Post-Holocaust Fiction: An Introduction to the Teacher 32

Mr. Sammler's Planet

First Assignment 33

Sixth Assignment 34

Films 35

Speakers 38

Writing Assignments 39

Bibliography 42

Appendix A 44

Ten Lectures on Germany (1740-1945)
(with quiz and text questions)

Appendix B 60

"The Biography of a Poem," John Felstiner
from The New Republic, April 2, 1984.

Foreword

This curriculum can operate in a number of ways. It concentrates on the literature of the Holocaust, and all or part of it can be used as a supplement to a course in history or social studies as well as a course in literary analysis. (It can also be used for parent seminars or other adult education vehicles.) As such, it looks at the ways in which a particular period in history affected the literature that was created to tell about it. According to the critic Alvin Rosenfeld,

> Just as we designate and give validity to such concepts as "The Renaissance Mind" and "Romantic Sensibility" and "The Victorian Temper" to indicate earlier shifts in awareness and expression, so, too, should we begin to see that Holocaust literature is an attempt to express a new order of consciousness, a recognizable shift in being. The human imagination after Auschwitz is simply not the same as it was before.[1]

This guide consists of a detailed set of lesson plans for six literary works: a diverse collection of short stories; Elie Wiesel's autobiographical novel, Night; Andre Schwarz-Bart's Prix-Goncourt-winning novel, The Last of the Just; two possible treatments of Anne Frank's diary; Tadeusz Borowski's novel-like collection of short stories, This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen, and the post-Holocaust work, Mr. Sammler's Planet by Saul Bellow. (See Bibliography, p. 43.) Lectures, films, quizzes and writing assignments, and supplementary class materials are also included.

These lesson plans can be used in several combinations: Night, which details a boy's confrontation with his loss of faith and the loss of his father in a concentration camp, completes, in a way, the relatively "antiseptic" story of young Anne Frank whose life ended after an experience like his although we have documentation only for her energetic, visionary experiences in Holland before she was taken to Westerbork and died in Bergen-Belsen.

The Last of the Just is a complex book, but one which can be understood and appreciated by many secondary-school students. It presents a number of moral and ethical parallels to their own experience and, when taught with Night, it shows how both fiction and autobiography can serve to represent historical and emotional truth.

This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen is antithetical to Night in its starkness of language and image and its lack of metaphor in contrast to Wiesel's use of comparison. Because of its many horrifying details, it should not be taught alone, and it should be reserved for courses in which a thorough and careful preparation of historical background is possible.

The post-Holocaust novel, Mr. Sammler's Planet, is sexually explicit in the extreme. I include the possibility of teaching it only because it is central to the idea that there is, post-Auschwitz, "a new order of consciousness."

---

[1]Alvin Rosenfeld, A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1980), p. 13.

Notes on the Holocaust and on Antisemitism

1. The term "Holocaust," to quote from Rosenfeld, "signifies the inexplicable and almost incomprehensible tragedy of European Jewry during the Nazi period."[2] In spite of right-wing fringe groups, this course proceeds on the fact that the Holocaust is an historical event. I entertain no speculation on the subject.

2. Antisemitism is the persistent hatred of Jews which has existed in every country and at every level of society throughout history. The terms "semite" and "semitic" have often been used as pejoratives; the concommitant word, "antisemitism," is therefore doubly offensive, implying as it does that there is an identifiable "semitic" character against which one can be "anti." Therefore, antisemitism (except in a title or at the head of a sentence) is always spelled "antisemitism," undistinguished by a capital letter and unhyphenated to underscore the absence of "semitism" as a racial epithet.

* * * * * * * * *

My original interest in teaching this "Literature of the Holocaust" course was fostered by my reading of a social studies curriculum developed for the Brookline, Massachusetts, public schools and now in use in many independent as well as public schools throughout the country. The curriculum, published by Intentional Educations, Inc. of Watertown, Massachusetts, is: Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior by Margot Stern Strom and William Parsons (see next page).

I highly recommend that anyone undertaking to teach "Literature of the Holocaust" first familiarize her or himself with this curriculum and consider using parts of it to underscore what that curriculum calls "the universal questions of morality and the lessons to be learned from a history of totalitarianism, racism, and dehumanization." Its lessons can be easily incorporated, and it is almost imperative for students to have access to some of the background it provides.

When used in conjunction with the following lesson plans and the appendix of history lectures, there is material for a full sixteen- or seventeen-week course for capable students in an interdisciplinary course, or in a course that can focus on either literary or historical examination of the period. It is, of course, also appropriate for adults.

---

[2] Ibid., p. 3.

Facing History: An Overview

The Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc., is committed to helping teachers and administrators bring education about twentieth-century genocide, specifically the Holocaust and the genocide of the Armenian people, to students and their communities. Traditionally, textbooks and classroom teachers have avoided education about recent controversial and painful historical events as well as about human rights, the abuse of power, unthinking obedience, and racism. Yet despite this avoidance, the Facing History Foundation has developed and disseminated a flexible interdisciplinary curriculum unit appropriate for adolescents who are engaged in understanding human behavior, particularly around the themes of peer pressure, conformity, individual and group behavior, and the role of the individual in a complex society. The curriculum has also been successfully used in a wide range of settings, including public and private secondary schools, and university, interfaith, and adult education classes in over 300 communities.

The program uses the resource book, Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior, and an approach to teaching about this difficult history that was originally developed in 1976 as a unit for junior high school students in the Brookline, Massachusetts public school system. That program was funded by federal monies authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Building on the initial success, the project expanded into a nonprofit foundation serving school systems nationwide and in Canada.

Although the content of the program focuses on genocide, the approach and methodology have broad applicability for any curricula involved with difficult subject matters. Facing History staff members are involved in a variety of activities: planning and offering teacher-training workshops and conferences; creating new resource materials and teacher aids; maintaining an active roster of visiting speakers, including Holocaust survivors and scholars, and developing new financial resources to support the foundation's programs. Services and resources can also be used to enhance courses already underway. Further information about Facing History and Ourselves (and cost of Resource Books) is available by writing to 25 Kennard Rd., Brookline, MA 02146, or by calling 617-232-1595.

Chapters

1. An Introduction
2. Society and the Individual
3. Antisemitism: A Case Study of Prejudice and Discrimination
4. German History: World War I to II
5. Nazi Philosophy and Policy
6. Preparing for Obedience
7. Victims of Tyranny
8. The Holocaust
9. Who Knew? Individuals, Groups, and Nations
10. Judgment
11. The Armenians
    Part I A Case of Forgotton Genocide
    Part II Do We Learn From Past Experiences?
12. Facing Today and the Future

Assignments

Each assignment represents the reading to be done prior to the discussion indicated in the lesson plan. Most of them are approximately fifty pages in length and would require an hour-and-a-half to two hours of preparation time. (See Bibliography, p. 43.)

Five Short Stories

1. "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut
   "Some of Us Had Been Threatening Our Friend Colby" by Donald Barthelme
2. "White Chalah" by Lamed Shapiro
3. "The Story of My Dovecot" by Isaac Babel
4. "Badenheim 1939" by Aharon Appelfeld

Night by Elie Wiesel

1. Chapters 1-3
2. Chapters 4-6
3. Chapters 7-8

The Last of the Just by Andre Schwarz-Bart

1. Chapter 1 "The Legend of The Just Men"
2. Chapter 2 "Zemyock"
3. Chapter 3 "Stillenstadt"
4. Chapter 4 "The Just Man of the Flies"
5. Chapter 5 "Herr Kremer and Fraulein Ilse"
6. Chapter 6 "The Dog"
7. Chapter 7 "The Marriage of Ernie Levy"
8. Chapter 8 "Never Again"

The Diary of Anne Frank by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett

(Allow three weeks for play production. See p. 23.)

1. Act I
2. Act II

This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen by Tadeusz Borowski

1. Examination of two poems
2. "This Way for the Gas"
3. "A Day at Harmentz"; "The People Who Walked On"
4. "Auschwitz, Our Home"; "The Death of Schillinger"; "The Man with the Package"
5. "The Supper"; "A True Story"; "Silence"; "The January Offensive"; "A Visit"; "The World of Stone"

Mr. Sammler's Planet by Saul Bellow

1. Chapter 1
2. Chapter 2

Assignments cont'd.

3. Chapter 3
4. Chapter 4
5. Chapter 5
6. Chapter 6

This constitutes thirty lessons (including an introductory class). The course can be extended with use of the films and Facing History and Ourselves or contracted by omission of some of the literature. The use of the brief lectures in Appendix A is recommended as introductory to the first ten classes.

* * * * * * * * * * *

An Introduction to the Course

1. This course differs from a history course in that its focus is not so much on what happened as it is on the ways in which people have represented what happened. Our job here is to encounter the reality of the most devastating event in human history through the creative expression of those who lived through it, those who died in its onslaught, and those who have contemplated, during and after the Holocaust, its meaning and its existence.

This is a course in which there are many questions but only complex answers, many of which can be found for each individual only by her or himself. There is no simple explanation or understanding but rather an opportunity to consider many perspectives.

We shall be talking particularly about literature that treats of the period between 1933 and 1945, although some of it was written before that time and some of it long afterwards. In order to discuss the material, we must understand the history both of the Germans who perpetrated the Holocaust and of the other citizens of the world in which it happened. In addition, we need to understand that, as the historian Lucy Dawidowicz has said, there were two wars: the Second World War and the war against the Jews.

2. Ask the class what questions they have when they think about the Holocaust. Write the questions on butcher paper with a marking pen and tape them up around the room (above the chalk boards, if possible, so that they do not impede the use of the room). During this question period, make no attempt to answer the questions or to comment upon them. They will remain on the walls (or copied into student notebooks) for the entire term. Ask students to refer to them from time to time as inspirations for their discussion or journal writing. At the end of the course, use the questions as the basis for an exam question. (See writing assignments, p. 40.)

Short Stories: An Introduction to the Teacher

By beginning with subject matter only tangentially connected with the Holocaust, students are encouraged to see that they can bring to this new material skills that they have previously learned in dealing with literature, through which they have already tried to discern what is "true" or "real" about life.

The examination of these stories moves from two post-Holocaust works ("Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut and "Some of Us Had Been Threatening Our Friend Colby" by Donald Barthelme) about totalitarianism and inhumanity through two stories specifically about anti-Jewish persecution ("White Chalah" by Lamed Shapiro and "The Story of My Dovecot" by Isaac Babel) to a final story that is about the Holocaust ("Badenheim 1939" by Aharon Appelfeld).

The lesson plans concentrate on the ways in which authors persuade audiences to think about difficult subjects. All are based on the students' ability to recognize the role that narrative point of view plays in our acceptance of what we read. (See p. 4 for assignment schedule.)

Bibliography (See p. 43.)

Appelfeld, Aharon. "Badenheim 1939." In The Penguin Book of Jewish Short Stories. New York: Penguin Books, 1979.

Babel, Isaac. "The Story of My Dovecot." In The Penguin Book of Jewish Short Stories. New York: Penguin Books, 1979.

Barthelme, Donald. "Some of Us Had Been Threatening Our Friend Colby." In Story and Structure. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983.

Shapiro, Lamed. "White Chalah." In The Penguin Book of Jewish Short Stories. New York: Penguin Books, 1979.

Vonnegut, Kurt. "Harrison Bergeron." In Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior. Watertown, MA: Intentional Educations, Inc., 1982.

Short Stories: First Assignment

"Harrison Bergeron"

This story is told by an anonymous narrator with a single-character point of view, that of Harrison Bergeron's father. The narrator's stand on the material is flat, devoid of affect, and lets the horror of it emerge through the thoughts of the father as he is continually penalized by his "handicaps" in the society in which all people have been created equal by the "Handicapper General." With the emergence of Harrison Bergeron as the self-proclaimed emperor who manages momentarily to free himself from the perfect society, the story enters the realm of fantasy. Harrison and his chosen bride rise in the air, and for one brief second, the totalitarian regime is destroyed until the "Handicapper General" herself is able to subdue and kill the miscreants.

When students discuss what happens when everyone is made "equal," they can be encouraged to think about the rights of the individual in society. They see how Vonnegut uses the literary devices of narrative point of view and fantasy to recreate the situation, to make the reader feel the pain and sorrow of repression as well as the momentary exultation of freedom.

Question: Could Kurt Vonnegut have written this story before 1933?

"Some of Us Had Been Threatening Our Friend Colby"

This story uses first-person subjective narration in which the narrator tries to convince us of his side of a grisly hanging by ignoring completely the nature of murder and emphasizing the aesthetic and social nature of the event. The ironic truth of such a narrative form is that by its very distancing, it serves to bring into the foreground of the reader's consciousness the circumstances it has set out to hide. The reader perceives the tale through her/his own consciousness of the innate wrongness of the position taken by the narrator.

Again, students discuss their own views about the reliability of the narrator and the way in which Barthelme seems to try to convince us of one set of facts while actually convincing us of quite another.

Two weeks into the course, take ten minutes of class time to ask students to make some connections between these stories and the Holocaust; by that time they have seen the film, "The Milgram Experiment"(see Films, p. 36) and have begun to think about notions of obedience to immoral principles.

Short Stories: Second Assignment

"White Chalah"[3] by Lamed Shapiro

This is a story of religious persecution with its roots in ignorance, fear, and religious mysticism. The protagonist, Vasil, is a backward and superstitious Ukranian peasant and foot-soldier. The time of the story is never identified, but Vasil in the end acts on the superstitious connection he has made about how Jews differ from him and how he has been made to suffer in his degraded, unenlightened life.

This story can be best looked at through the two unfamiliar terms, "white chalah" and the final lines about "the high priest." By asking students to look for the character of Vasil, his conception of Jews and their Sabbath bread, and all the religious references in the story, they finally come to see that antisemitism is Vasil's religion and that, in his baseness and bestiality, he is its highest practitioner. The point of view of the story is again an anonymous, detached third-person narrator with the clouded, confused, ignorant point of view of Vasil. We come to understand only what he understands, but our own ability to conceive of metaphor and symbol helps us to understand the most abstract moment in the story, Vasil's murder and defilement of the Jewish woman who seems to him to be made of "White Chalah."

Some simple definitions of literal and figurative language:

> Image: Sense experience conveyed in language
> (A brown dog scratched itself on a white fence.)
>
> Symbol: Something that stands for itself and something else
> (You can't teach an old dog new tricks.)
>
> Metaphor: Something that stands for something other than itself
> (Some dirty dog stole my wallet.)[4]

It is best to tell students how easily these terms shade into one another but that a recognition of figurative language might be a signal that a story can be read other than literally. Given what we have learned in class about antisemitism, we can see how the presence of the bread (a Christian as well as a Jewish symbol) which turns into a woman in the simple mind of Vasil is the key to understanding the story: the woman becomes the Host in a necrophilic and barbaric ritual.

---

[3]Chalah is a specially baked loaf of white bread eaten at Jewish Sabbath and holiday meals.

[4]From Lawrence Perrine, Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982).

Short Stories: Third Assignment

"The Story of My Dovecot" by Isaac Babel

This story uses detached autobiographical narrative; the point of view is that of a nine-year-old boy, but the story is obviously told at a much later time, for the narrator frequently steps out and comments:

> Somewhere far away, Woe rode across (the earth) on a great steed, but the noise of the hoofbeats grew weaker and died away, and silence, the bitter silence that sometimes overwhelms children in their sorrow, suddenly deleted the boundary between my body and the earth that was moving nowither (p. 100).

The young boy accepts antisemitism as he accepts the air he breathes; at the beginning of the story, he is unquestioning about why he, as a Jew, must work harder for admission to advanced study than his non-Jewish classmates. By the end, however, the horror of antisemitism has caused actual death as well as the end to the boy's dream of a collection of birds of peace.

The boy's parents are aware of the danger and are reluctant to let him go out into the world to buy the doves for which he has saved. When he does so, he ends up in the middle of a pogrom.[5] Because of his ignorance of what is happening, we are also ignorant. It is not until the last lines of the story that the name "pogrom" is given to the horror we have experienced through his eyes.

The imagery of the story shades into symbolism as the birds the boy buys, chosen for their beauty, are crushed against his head by the cigarette vendor of whom the narrator has said, "The children loved him."

The innocent nature of the observer enhances our own wonder and dawning horror as we go from the acceptance of antisemitism to the point where its brutality finally becomes the killer of an old man. Isaac Babel's ironic portrayal of the victim, first as a man who "differed from ordinary folk in the lying stories he used to tell about the Polish Rising of 1861" and who dies with a fish stuck in the "rent of his trousers," wrenches the reader's consciousness to recognize that no Jew escapes fear, degradation, and finally death in the world where antisemitism holds sway.

---

[5]pogrom: organized raids on Jewish settlements, involving murder and rapine.

Short Stories: Fourth Assignment

"Badenheim 1939" by Aharon Appelfeld

This is a story whose horror is expressed in what is not said rather that what is said. Readers may not be familiar with the German place name and the date, but general knowledge of the beginnings of the destructive period will suffice. (In 1939, some Jews living in Germany who were Polish nationals were expelled back into Poland instead of being sent to concentration camps.)

"Badenheim 1939" offers a good opportunity to talk about the place of religion in the lives of the assimilated Jews of Germany. The Rabbi in the story is shown as crippled. When he enters the resort hotel which is the central setting of the story and discovers that the people residing there (and living a secular, pleasure-seeking, "cultured" life) are Jews, he asks, "And who is your rabbi?" "You are. You are our rabbi," comes the answer. Appelfeld's idea that these people's lack of religious observance adds to the emptiness of their lives is untinged by any notion that this lack is responsible for their fate, but the irony that they are being deported as Jews when they have ignored their Judaism is not lost on the reader.

At the close of the story, the rabbi performs the Havdalah service, the service that indicates that the Sabbath has ended. In the larger terms of the story, the Day of Rest has indeed ended, and the Jewish notion of Sabbath, the holiest of days, the most important period of the week, is truncated by a horror in the mind of the reader who knows that for the Jews of Badenheim, all "Sabbaths" are coming to an end.

The point of view of this story, an anonymous narrator with no character's particular focus, may remind many students of Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery." The same technique is used to produce the irony in the readers' realizing, only at the end, what the inhabitants of the story face. The presence of a woman who knows but is termed mad prepares students for the same idea in Wiesel's Night where the first character we meet tries to warn the populace and is not believed; later on, an occupant of the boxcars taking Wiesel and his family to Birkenau "sees" the fires of the crematoria and is deemed insane.

Night First Assignment: Chapters 1-3

This is a particularly good book to show that autobiography also includes choices of material and techniques in order to present "reality." If knowing that a book is autobiographical makes it automatically more "real," creativity and imagination are still areas for contemplation by readers of Holocaust literature.

Begin with the first paragraph, asking why Weisel chooses to start his book with an introduction to Moché, the beadle, an insignificant character whose very insignificance is part of his importance. One of the two central points about Moché is that he forms young Elie Wiesel's belief in the "ecstatic" Judaism of cabbala[6], used here to denote the store of Jewish esoteric lore usually connected with mysticism, and Chasidism[7]. This belief which so strongly motivates him at the beginning of the book deserts him swiftly as events unfold, but it colors his view of God throughout the story.

Secondly, Moché becomes one of the "annunciators," someone who comes back to Sighet after his own deportation to tell the Jews of the danger, a danger they consciously ignore. Although this is a "real" figure, students also understand its transmigration into the "kill the messenger" or "ignore the messenger" figure of other literature, and this leads to a discussion of our own consciousness of the imminence of death. We consider those who ignore it as normal and those who dwell upon it as mad. Madame Schachter is a later model of this figure. Her knowledge is not explained; that is, it has no source in experience as does Moché's; thus she is a mystical example of the same principle, even in "real" autobiography. We can see that even autobiography uses these literary characters and that we understand their significance.

Because the book relies very heavily on metaphor (the title becomes the overriding embodiment of disaster), we examine on page 10 the metaphor of the operating room and the firmament, larger contexts of Elie Wiesel's experience in his struggle for survival on earth and his despair at the loss of his faith.

---

[6]cabbala: literally, "that which has been handed down."

[7]Chasidism: A religious movement of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with origins in Eastern Europe.

Night Second Assignment: Chapters 4-6

The examination of metaphor continues in these chapters. Ask students to underline all the comparisons they find in their reading and through them to recognize how metaphor creates tone and setting. Even if we are not aware of the horror of the concentration camp from the first part of a metaphor ("The camp looked as though it had suffered an epidemic:..."), the second part emphasizes the emotional response Wiesel is trying to convey, "empty and dead."

There appears in these chapters a theme frequently heard in the testimony of survivors: aside from pure chance, it was very often a prisoner's connection with another that allowed him the extra measure of strength to survive. Thus children and parents, close relatives, or even people from the same town lived for one another and, when these relationships were severed, very often the will to survive was lost. Elie's dilemma about his father and his comparison of his own actions towards his father (his fear of cowardice, of not wanting to protect his father during beatings) to those of other sons and fathers serves ironically. He is afraid that needing to protect his weak and aging parent holds him back; in fact, it was undoubtedly a source of increased ability to endure the hardships of incarceration, starvation, and brutality. The particular situation of this relationship is a good topic for discussion with students; it plays a part in their identification with the narrator as they consider their own relationships with parents and what fear of separation means to them.

The strongest metaphor in chapter four is that of the soup which Wiesel uses twice to describe his reaction to the horrors of being a witness to murder. The first time, "I found the soup excellent that evening." The second, "That night the soup tasted of corpses." Since Wiesel is concerned with explaining "what concentration camp had made of me" and of examining his loss of faith in God, this metaphor offers an opportunity to examine the larger statement made by a single phrase.

Night Third Assignment: Chapters 7-8

In discussing the final part of the book, we return again to the notion of the choices that an autobiographical writer makes in determining how to select and present his material. The relationship between Wiesel and his father is the primary focus of this part, and students can see from the sheer weight of the material that this is the part of his experience which Wiesel considers as the most important.

Wiesel uses the basics of hunger and food as the conduits of strong feeling throughout the book. He ends with a combination of metaphors of food and death that underscores the thin thread of survival under the most basic conditions of deprivation.

From students' own imaginations, they can construct some of the other losses Wiesel must have felt during these adolescent years. They know their own needs for socialization, beauty, stimulation, and, on a less abstract level, for material possessions, medical care, education. The lesson here can only be one of real priorities: Wiesel's book leads students to see that finally he judges love, faith, and sustenance to be worthy of consideration. They see that their own temporal concerns can be put in better perspective by their reading of this account of a young boy's experience.

Looking ahead: Anne Frank concentrates on her daily concerns in her imprisonment; they are closer to the concerns of young readers but, in a sense, Wiesel's experiences are the finale of Anne's journal.

For a comparison of technique based on autobiographical experience, This Way For the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen, with its conscientious avoidance, insofar as possible, of metaphor, shows students that there are other powerful ways of recording concentrationary reality.[8]

---

[8]Concentrationary reality: I do not know the origin of this term; I have read it in both French and English criticism. Its meaning will become obvious: the camps changed every human order, every human expectation. They in fact produced their own reality.

The Last of the Just First Assignment: pp. 1-21

When we know, either by the book itself or its reputation, that we are reading autobiography, we know we will read a certain kind of truth, the truth as it appears to one writer in one time period. Fiction can add dimensions to this truth and can take it into a broader realm as Andre Schwarz-Bart does when he gives us a first chapter that begins in the twelfth century and ends in the eighteenth. He names sources on which we do not need to check; reading fiction, we know that he intends us to believe them real, and that he is purposely setting his story of Ernie Levy into a longer chronicle. The question for students in reading this catalogue of martyrdoms is why the author would choose to begin his book with a history of antisemitism, couched in the story of one family's tribulations through the ages.

There are at least two theories of perception of the Holocaust, one as a period sui generis, that is, a cataclysmic occurrence that happened because of factors particular to that time and that place. Another is the idea that the Holocaust is the sum total of a history of antisemitism, its final horrific embodiment. Schwarz-Bart chooses to tell his story in the light of this latter theory.

The Talmudic legend[9] of the Lamed-Vov, the idea of there being in the world at any one time thirty-six just individuals in whom resides the ability to take upon themselves all the sorrows of living men, is the basis for Schwarz-Bart's work. He changes the original idea in two basic ways, however, in having a dynastic descent through one family, which is not part of the original legend, and in his eschewal of the principle of anonymity. Very often in this work, other people are aware of the identity of the Just Man, particularly within the Levy family. One of the most fruitful areas for students to examine is the way in which Schwarz-Bart changes the concept of exactly what a Just Man does for other people and for himself. As students read on, ask them to keep a list of their ideas of the Just Man as presented by Schwarz-Bart.

---

[9]The Talmud is the commentary of early rabbis on Jewish life and law.

The Last of the Just Second Assignment: pp. 25-79

In the first section of the book, Schwarz-Bart has established the "legendary" quality of the book, the part that says, "This is an old history; these are old explanations handed down to explain the way we are." The second part, "Zemyock," shows what happens to the Levy family when they are living in relative peace and isolation in their little mountain town in Poland.

At this point, students have an opportunity to examine the character of the ironic narrator, using the passage on page 28:

> The Holocausts of life, they say, often follow the roads laid out for commerce and industry, but Zemyock was huddled in a valley, hidden from the world's eye; regionally traffic went by beyond the hills, and as there was neither a nobleman nor a priest for at least a league in either direction, the peasants lived on human terms with these Jews, artisans and trimmers of crystal. From time immemorial, perhaps more than a hundred years, the faithful had died gently, between two sheets, fearing only cholera, the plague, and the holy name of God.

In this excerpt, ask students to identify to what elements (commerce, nobility, the Church) Schwarz-Bart attributes the persecution against which the previous generations of Just Men had to fight but which were temporarily stilled in Zemyock. In addition, these chapters show what the world was like in the beginning of the nineteenth century when "a newborn, industrial Poland (was) nibbling away squarely at the primarily artisans' life of the Jews" (p. 35).

In the Zemyock chapters, Schwarz-Bart changes the dynastic descent of the Just Men from direct father-to-son to the entire family. He says that at one time the expiring Just Man of the Levys would die with his successor's name on his lips; at other times no one would know who the successor was. Thus he leaves Mordecai and Benjamin at the end of the reading with only the suspicion of inheritance. Meanwhile, the ranks of the Lamed-Vov have expanded to contain not only the sufferings of humanity but, with the ascension of Brother Beast to the title, also the pain of all living things.

This assignment ends with a pogrom which puts the capstone on the years of calm isolation; now, their faith shaken, Judith and Mordecai, who have become dynastic heads of family as the narration has focused more and more on this single branch of the family, allow Benjamin to leave Zemyock. Students have an idea of what this portends not only because of the first paragraph of the book which foretells the end but because they sense the book's construction in moving out of this relatively peaceful period in history.

The Last of the Just Third Assignment: pp. 83-140

The narrator continues to distance himself with a legendary quality interspersed with passages of narration. For example, he says of the list of the countries which Benjamin considers for emigration that their names seemed

> as altogether fantastic as the squares traced out by children in the Jewish version of hopscotch, which stood for a load of white bread, a sigh, a pound of chick-peas, an insult, a chicken in the pot, a Polish slap, a million zlotys, typhus, a week among the angels, and finally a pogrom (p. 83).

Did Schwarz-Bart make up all these rich allusions? Probably. Why these things? Why this order? In examining this list, students can see Schwarz-Bart's irony as well as his insistence on reminding us of the vagaries in which Jewish life abounded, in danger of extermination on earth ("a pogrom") and a mystical redemption, albeit a short one ("a week among the angels") in heaven.

When the narrative focuses on Benjamin's stay in Berlin where he meets the strange Galician, Yankel (another Just Man perhaps?) and his move to Stillenstadt, the author is making a comparison between the strength of Zemyock in its isolation and the temptations of the larger world where Jews are open to other influences, including conversion. The weakness for Jews in Germany, according to the extended tale of the apostate (p. 106 ff.), lies in their forgetting their Jewish heritage and that body of knowledge and spiritual strength which sustained them over hundreds of years. Schwarz-Bart makes the Eastern European Jews the repository of this knowledge.

As they enter the gentile society, as they wish more contact with it, as they assimilate into it, they will lose, he says, not only their innocence but their strength. Thus Mordecai is the keeper not only of the legends of the Just Men but of the ancient beliefs and practices, while Benjamin is both an appeaser and an innocent. He thinks that by humbling himself to the Germans, he will not threaten the Germans nor cause them to despise the Jews. He proves, of course, to be wrong, but this wish to assimilate provides a rich vein of discussion for students. Do they think that culture and traditions strengthen or weaken segments of society? If prejudice comes from "difference" or the perception of difference, would not assimilation provide the answer?

In this reading, Schwarz-Bart makes a direct reference to Jesus: "It was the year 1933 after the coming of Jesus, the beautiful herald of impossible love" (p. 140). Was Jesus a Just Man? This is the time to begin considering the similarities and differences between Jesus and Ernie, seeing Schwarz-Bart broaden the story from that of men to that of archetypes. In this chapter also occurs the reenactment of the crucifixion in which Ernie is forced to deny the Christ and is then wounded himself, furthering the comparison and the irony.

The Last of the Just Fourth Assignment: pp. 143-201

In these chapters, we begin to examine notions of choice and the idea of martyrdom, portrayed in the mind of small Ernie Levy. At this point, the narrative focuses so entirely on Ernie that we follow only him, go where he goes, and are privy to his thoughts. The narration becomes like a camera which can pan over large areas and zoom in on one small boy. An interesting topic for discussion in this portion is why Schwarz-Bart has made Ernie so obviously the child of his grandparents rather than of his own father and mother who have been portrayed as appeasers and of timid character.

During the incident in the synagogue and the first visit of the Brown Shirts to the Levys' Stillenstadt home, Ernie finds himself acting as a Just Man, even though he doesn't entirely comprehend what a Just Man is. Like Ernie, the readers of this chapter have to trace Ernie's consciousness of his own possible Justness.

Schwarz-Bart combines fantasy and fiction in this chapter; the distinctions are best observed by asking students to find examples of flights of fancy, sorrow, humor, and tragedy. Above all, in this reading, students should try to see the first stirrings of choice as Ernie prepares for the martyrdom that we know will end in "The Last of the Just."

The Last of the Just Fifth Assignment: pp. 205-252

The book thus far has examined many of the complicated behaviors of German citizens. In this reading, we see the plights of two who are connected to Ernie Kremer and Fraulein Ilse.

Ilse is a difficult character for students to comprehend without understanding that Schwarz-Bart is contrasting the natural facts of maturation (Ilse and Ernie have always been attracted to each other in a romantic way) with the wholly unnatural ideas of the segregation of Jewish children and their persecution by schoolmates and school officials.

Herr Kermer is an example of the failure of education and humane thinking in a world where no humanistic values are respected. Both Christian and Secular worlds stand accused in this chapter. Ilse has been symbolically and literally introduced as the Virgin, and Herr Kremer, representing enlightened thinking and the highest courage, cannot save either of the children from the paths on which the Nazis have set their feet. The chapter in Facing History and Ourselves which deals with "Education for Obedience" provides a fine counterpoint for this reading.

Narratively speaking, Schwarz-Bart brings the camera down so closely on Ernie that we can feel what he feels, and we too are convinced that we are seeing a Just Man. Ask students to see how "he acknowledged that the order of the universe would not yield to his misfortune" (p. 245), and that in this acknowledgement he understands that he must take on the misfortunes of others.

We see that Ernie is different from everyone else, those who still believe that God will change their suffering lot. Finally, it is clear that Ernie himself, young though he is, recognizes his fate, for "neither the Just Men nor the dead and dying of the neighborhood had ever been in a situation comparable to his own. There was no tuberculosis, no torture, no massacre; there was only Ernie in the attic" (p. 247).

Students will want to examine the several reasons why Ernie tries to take his own life. They see that the uncertainty of his election to a Just Man as well as the burdens which that status imposes upon him are as real as the fear and suffering. The next question, of course, is why he fails.

The Last of the Just Sixth Assignment: pp. 255-302

In this chapter, readers experience with Ernie the rebellion that comes before acquiescence as Ernie rebels against his heritage and his humanity. In a way, this is like the denial every adolescent goes through before they must take on the responsibilities of maturity. Because Ernie's responsibilities are so enormous, his rebellion is equally as degraded.

In addition to a vision of Ernie as a man marked by the loss of an eye (which will eventually give him clarified vision, much as it does to Artur Sammler in Mr. Sammler's Planet) and by the scars of his attempted suicide, this reading contains a number of verifiable historical events which form the outside framework in which the tale continues. These events also give Schwarz-Bart an opportunity to exercise his ironic narrative voice.

1. The assasination of the First Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris by Herschel Grynszpan, a young man whose parents had just been deported to a concentration camp (November 6, 1938).

2. The ensuing Kristallnacht (the night of broken windows) which the Third Reich had long planned and for which they used Grynszpan's action as an inciting incident (November 10, 1938).

3. The opening of the port of Hamburg in Germany so that the Jews could leave, only to find there was no country that would take them in (November 11, 1938).

4. The surrender of the French forces and the ceding of half of France to the conquering Germans (1941).

Students should note the ways in which Schwarz-Bart mixes this reality into his story to give a special credence not only to the Holocaust but to Ernie's participation in the aftermath.

In this chapter is a brilliant example of Schwarz-Bart's bitter tone:

> But six weeks later, the Levys saw their pogrom as a frankly providential nudge. Mother Judith saw in it nothing less than the hand of God. The remote reason was that, paying Germany back in her own coin, everything under the skullcap of the heavens that called itself a democracy condemned her, in reprisal for her antisemitism, to keep her Jews. The punishment was brilliant. It was applied at the precise moment when Nazism, out of patience, suffocating with Yiddishness, opened Hamburg to Yiddish emigration. Draining toward that port by the tens of thousands, the German Jews were brought up painfully against democracy's order of the day--"No Visa." A few handfuls set sail anyway. In the name of humanity, they were not sunk but were permitted to die at anchor in London, Marseilles, New York, Tel Aviv, and Malacca and Singapore and Valaparaiso and at any anchor they wished (p. 271).

The Last of the Just Seventh Assignment: pp. 305-347

For one brief moment, the novel that is The Last of the Just allows us a glimpse of the romantic vision that humanizes Ernie and makes him more attractive in our eyes: he falls in love. Although it has sometimes been difficult for students, in the course of reading the book, to see Ernie as anything more than symbolic of his eventual fate, this is the chapter in which he becomes an ordinary person, an ordinary character. Of course because of his excessive humanity, the object of his affection is disabled; Ernie still suffers for the sorrows of others. But in their love and in their brief moments of freedom, strolling without the disfiguring Jewish star, entering a cinema, sitting in the park, these lovers are Schwarz-Bart's way of showing, in the midst of what could not be, what might have been.

From this vision of unreality (which makes the characters more real) intrudes, of course, reality. Drancy, the embarcation point from which thousands of Jews in France left for the Eastern camps, is and was a verifiable place. The choice that Ernie tried to make in Chapter Four now becomes the focus of the novel. He is a grown man, and it is through his choice of self-sacrifice that Schwarz-Bart will show him as taking control of his own life.

The chapter is called "The Marriage of Ernie Levy," and it is not just the dream of the marriage that marks it as a rite of passage; it is the fulfillment of Ernie's destiny to be able to sacrifice himself. It is important that students understand that the marriage is a dream only; looking at its separate elements and comparing them to the fantastical world of dreams is a sad and enlightening exercise.

The Last of the Just Eighth Assignment: pp. 351-374

Asking students in class to respond to Alvin Rosenfeld's evaluation, either in writing or in discussion, is a fitting conclusion to the study of this complex work.

> The Last of the Just, rooted as it is in...the most imaginative and hallowed of Jewish religious and folk sources...advanced beyond most previous attempts at fictionalizing the Holocaust by projecting a possible meaningfulness to Jewish suffering and even a measure of freedom within it. Both are ultimately driven to their limits, to be sure, for both are predicated on the finalities of Jewish martyrdom, yet Schwarz-Bart succeeded far more than he failed in showing the courage, dignity, grace, and compassion that can attend such tragic action. His point in doing so, clearly, is to affirm that, even in impossible circumstances, one can choose death rather than be altogether terrorized and victimized by it. To die on one's own term and not succumb to the meanness and viciousness of the slaughterer, in other words, is to die at the height of spiritual resistance to oppression.[10]

---

[10]Rosenfeld, p. 69.

The Diary of Anne Frank An Introduction to the Teacher

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl is one of the most moving documents of the Holocaust for students because it so closely parallels their own feelings and moods, introduces them to a girl who might be one of them, and leaves them to imagine (although they really know) what happened to her.

If the course content suggested by this curriculum is followed, the reading of the play, The Diary of Anne Frank, based on the original diary, comes as a relief to students from the immediacy of dealing with the horror head-on as in the two previous works, Night and The Last of the Just. It is only after they have come to identify with Anne Frank from reading about her joys and her fears, her enthusiasms and her energy, that they recognize the tragedy not only of Anne but of the millions of innocent victims. Thus, although the work does not deal directly with brutality, it often has the effect of making the Holocaust an individual, personal experience of the ultimate deprivation, the deprivation of life.

The lesson plan that follows has as its goal a staged reading of the play by Goodrich and Hackett. In addition, a suggestion for a literary analysis of document-into-drama is included for teachers dealing with such critical aspects.

Background

> Natives of Frankfurt, Germany, the Frank family fled to Holland to escape persecution. When the Germans invaded, Mr. Frank prepared a hiding place in the attic of his business establishment. This "secret annex" became their prison, and Anne's diary became one of the great classics of prison literature. It records the triumphs and defeats of the imprisoned human spirit, the beginnings of maturity and love in the life of a young girl, and the anguish of Jewish history. The Franks were betrayed and Anne died in Bergen-Belsen....[11]

---

[11]Albert H. Friedlander, ed., Out of the Whirlwind: A Reader of Holocaust Literature (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p. 26.

The Diary of Anne Frank

Ask students to read Act One for the first day of homework, Act Two for the second, and to spend the remaining time practicing and refining their parts. The technical crew and the narrator will have special duties as outlined below.

Timetable: Usually three weeks before production for a class meeting four or five times a week.

Before beginning the reading, assign parts to students. This lesson plan is predicated on a class size of fifteen, but doubling of parts will serve a smaller class and an exchange of parts and costume symbols between Acts One and Two (a sash for Anne, an apron for Mrs. Frank, etc.) will serve a larger. There are four technical and eleven reading parts.

Technical Parts

Director: Guides reading, decides on staging, responsible for entire production, final arbiter of all questions.

Stage Manager: In charge of physically staging the production including lighting and props.

Designer: Designs and obtains costumes and programs.

"Go-fer": In charge of everything else, including video-taping if desired.

Reading Parts

Narrator: Creates own script out of stage directions
Mr. Frank: Anne's sympathetic and intelligent father
Miep: Generous young Dutch woman who helps to hide the Franks
Mrs. Van Daan: Vain woman who shares Franks' hiding place
Mr. Van Daan: Mrs. Van Daan's husband, a selfish man
Peter Van Daan: Their son, a heretofore shy, serious adolescent
Mrs. Frank: Anne's loving, sensitive mother
Margot Frank: Anne's model older sister
Anne Frank: A young aspiring writer who loves life
Mr. Kraler: The kind Dutch owner of the hiding place
Mr. Dussel: A fussy man in hiding with the Franks

The Diary of Anne Frank

Staged-Reading Production Notes

I strongly suggest, unless your talents include play production, that you avail yourself of the book Readers Theatre Handbook: A Dramatic Approach to Literature by Leslie Coger and Melvin White (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1982) for expert information on staged readings: these are the notes of an amateur! The Goodrich-Hackett script has often been produced in schools: it is a fine play, and it conveys an important message. And dramatic production provides an intense, practical experience which is as rewarding for students as an analytical study of the material.

1. This play lends itself well to a completely stylized reading (using risers or high and low stools) by a seated cast. Since its origin is in narrative rather than drama, the effectiveness is in the language and the situation rather than the action.

2. Producing the reading in an unusual space (a corridor, a lobby, a stairway) can create the effect of the prison which is what the secret annex effectively became for the Frank and Van Daan families. Such space also gives students a sense of the specialness of the situation.

3. Uniform dress (black and white is always effective) heightened by one or two strong accents which establish the character is recommended; I also suggest that students cover their books with uniform book jackets; construction paper will do.

4. If you are using a traditional stage, seating the narrator on the apron is a useful way of explaining to the audience that this is a character similar to the Stage Manager in "Our Town" whose job is to help them understand the proceedings.

5. Two very important elements of a staged reading are tone and diction, and students in their own rehearsals as well as those they do with the group need to be made aware that it is their voices that will carry the whole performance.

6. After the reading is in place, the "Go-fer" should be in charge of timing the production so that the director can know whether or not he/she needs to delete any lines. Students should be forewarned that this may happen, and that such deletions are wholly the decision of the director.

7. Because students are doing no outside work in this course during most of this production, I have never hesitated to call after-school or before-school rehearsals in what would otherwise be homework time.

The Diary of Anne Frank An Alternate Suggestion

The Francis Goodrich-Albert Hackett play is based on the school notebooks containing Anne's journal found by Otto Frank when he returned to Amsterdam after the liberation. As the introduction to the play says, "Although they have quoted lines from the diary, the play is virtually an independent work."

Given this fact, it might be an interesting exercise for students who are not involved in the production of the play (or, in that miraculous world where there is enough time, even for those who are) to read at least an excerpt from Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl[12] (if not the whole journal) and to make some conjectures about the practice of dramatization.

To examine the original work to see whence came not only the strong characterizations but also the very incidents that make up the play is also an excellent subject for student writing. Students might be asked to consider whether such "fictionalization" or "tampering" is, on the whole, a good thing; whether the power conveyed by the play and the opportunity to dramatize the message of Anne Frank's life and death to a broad audience is worth the imaginative effort.

There is a book by Ernst Schnabel, Anne Frank: A Portrait in Courage, which is out of print but might be located through state library loan systems. Drawing on the testimony of forty-two witnesses, documents relating to the German occupation of the Netherlands and other stories by Anne Frank, Ernst Schnabel fills in the portrait of the girl who revealed a fragment, in the diary she left behind, of her potential and her final tragedy. For some students, it is a necessary finale to their study of Anne Frank.

---

[12]There's a fine one in Friedlander's Out of the Whirlwind

This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen First Assignment

Smoke

by Henry David Thoreau

Light-winged smoke, Icarian bird
Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,
Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,
Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form
Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;
By night star-veiling, and by day
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;
Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,
And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.[13]

Smoke

By Jacob Glatstein

From the crematory flue
A Jew aspires to the Holy One
And when the smoke of him is gone,
His wife and children filter through.
Above us, in the height of sky,
Saintly billows weep and wait.
God, whereever you may be,
There all of us are also not.[14]

Before looking at Tadeusz Borowski's collection of short stories, Alvin Rosenfeld, in A Double Dying, suggests a look at the uses of metaphor in these two poems, one written in the nineteenth century, the other after the Holocaust. Students need to see that where we have always looked for metaphor in poetry and depended on it even in prose to extend and broaden our field of thinking, as Rosenfeld says, "There is no metaphor for Auschwitz, just as Auschwitz is not a metaphor for anything else" (p. 27).

In the Thoreau poem, ask students about the "Icarian bird" which "melts its pinions." There is usually someone who knows the story of Icarus and Daedalus, and from that we can travel through the richness that allusion gives the poem.

---

[13]Henry David Thoreau, "Smoke" in American Poetry and Prose, 3rd ed., Norman Foerster, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1947).

[14]Jacob Glatstein, "Smoke" in A Treasury of Yiddish Poetry, I. Howe and E. Greenberg, eds. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969).

This Way For the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen First Assignment cont'd

Thoreau is talking about smoke, but he is not very interested in the principles of smoke: he cares instead to use this image in a series of musings about "the fugitive and transient quality of life" as Rosenfeld says. Do the same kind of "metaphor hunt" with this poem as you did with Elie Wiesel's Night, and show that metaphor, while unquestionably an "additive" principle (that is, one that deepens and broadens the field of understanding) is also a distancing device: it takes the reader far away from the original object, the "literal" part of the metaphor, in this case, from smoke.

In the second poem, the closest idea to metaphor is that "a Jew aspires to the Holy One" which might at first be taken as a metaphor for prayer. But in fact there is no metaphor. The Jew does not only "aspire," he "expires," and, as Rosenfeld says, "we are soon brought to see that the entire poem is predicated upon the author's certain knowledge that we will recognize and be able to name the crime that resides behind or before words....The unspoken but unmistakeable ground of this poem....is the Holocaust (p. 26).

This exercise serves as introduction to the first story, the title story of This Way for the Gas, by Tadeusz Borowski. The introduction tells us that Borowski, a non-Jew, was imprisoned in Auschwitz and Dachau from 1943 to 1945, and that he committed suicide by inhaling gas in 1951. The first line of the first story is "all of us walk around naked." As the story continues, we realize that there is nothing metaphorical in this statement, that there is no shock or surprise intended but a mere statement of fact without any moral commentary. We have entered with Borowski the world of "concentrationary reality."

I ask students, before they read the story, to ask themselves how this reality differs, how the laws that govern the outside world are suspended. Their assignment for the second day is to take notes as they read "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen," the first story.

This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen Second Assignment

"This Way for the Gas"

The first story in this collection, written with as little metaphor as possible and exposing the daily life of the concentration camp in an almost affectless tone, provides students with an experience different from any that have preceded in the course. Gone are the meditations of Elie Wiesel, the complex, ironic narrative gyrations of Andre Schwarz-Bart. For most students, this flatness of narrative is shocking but somehow satisfying. They feel in it a stark truth, yet on later contemplation they realize that, like all fiction, it is just another kind of truth.

Ask students to go back to the first five stories read and see how these presentations differ from this story. Ask them to note how much more those authors depended on devices that distracted at the same time they drew the reader in.

Students confront the reality of the Canada Kommando: A Kommando was a work-detail, and Canada, as the story tells, was the name given to the labor-gang that unloaded the incoming transports of people destined for the gas chambers. The ironic name of the story, which gives the book its title, is the summation of the feelings of the narrator, Vorarbeiter Tadeuz, who allows himself in fact to feel very little.

This Way For the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen Third Assignment

"A Day at Harmenz" "The People Who Walked On"

Even more than in the first story, in "A Day at Harmenz," students become aware of the juxtaposition of images between the placid, bucolic surroundings and the sudden acts of brutality that characterized daily life in the camps for non-Jews. Borowski very matter-of-factly distinguishes life for Jews from life for others; the fact that the Jews' plight is so disastrous makes the others' lives, lives that we would find intolerable, almost pleasurable just by the comparison. It is this device of juxtaposition that students should see in this story.

Students also need help in understanding that there was indeed contact between camp inmates and people living outside the camp when the work-details involved tasks near the camp borders. Not only does this point to the lie of those who, living in the towns of Dachau or Auschwitz, said that they didn't know what was happening but it also makes a more ordinary situation of the camps, something more diurnal, more accepted.

As the critic Sidra de Koven Ezrahi says:

> Borowski is a chronicler of the small acts of compliance--and occasionally of bravery--that myriads of men performed as they "passed through" Auschwitz....We can tell in these stories the process by which the laws that govern the outside world are suspended.[15]

In looking at "The People Who Walked On," ask the students to count the number of times that Borowski talks about the two roads, the roads that led to the gas chambers. In contrast to the almost light-hearted way in which he talks about the names of the women's camps, he sounds this knell of the two roads. Talk about the effect this image has on the reader. For students who have seen the film "Kitty: Return to Auschwitz," there is an underlying horror because Kitty also underscores the reality of the camp by referring to the two roads.

---

[15]Sidra de Koven Ezrahi, By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), pp. 58-59.

This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen Fourth Assignment

"Auschwitz, Our Home (A Letter)" "The Death of Schillinger"

"The Man with the Package"

In discussing these three stories, look at the ways in which an author can tell the same story in many different forms. All of these stories are about life in concentration camps, yet each highlights a different aspect of that life. It may be helpful to paraphrase the stories because some of the ironies are so strong and Borowski's narrative so flat that students have difficulty seeing the specific meaning.

"Auschwitz, Our Home (A Letter)" uses epistolary form to indicate that there was a life before the camps, and it is the first story to talk about the hope of a better life afterwards.

"The Death of Schillinger" contains the ultimate irony: the foreman of the Sonderkommando[16] tells the narrator of the massacre of one group of Jews; the narrator tells us of the massacre of the Sonderkommando later, while staging a revolt. Good men died as bad men died. There was never any reward, on earth or seemingly in heaven, for what we consider justice. Cowards and brave men, brutes and victims, died the same deaths.

"The Man with the Package" is the first story in which the stance of the all-knowing narrator wavers; as he makes fun of the man who is about to be gassed hanging on to his package, the comments of his companion who says, "I don't know what I would do if I were going to the gas chambers. I might also want to take along my package," seem momentarily to move the narrator and force him for once to feel.

---

[16]Sonderkommando: Those Jews who were charged with emptying the ovens of the crematoria and disposing of the charred remains.

This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen Fifth Assignment

"The Supper" "A True Story" "Silence" "The January Offensive"

"The Visit" "The World of Stone"

These stories move from the last days of hopeless incarceration through the narrator's experience as he tries to cope with the world outside the camps. Instead of focusing on the literal meaning of each story, ask students to see how a narrative stance such as Borowski's, a deliberate keeping away from hope and from emotion, permanently damages the possibility for a return to a life based on pre-Holocaust ideas of the possibility of goodness and redemption. The greatest contrast is provided by Anne Frank's innocent optimism when she says, "In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

In considering these two positions, students must recall the original words of the introduction to this course: that there are only complex answers. The testimony of survivors shows the wide range of feelings left after the fact: some have great faith in the possibility of the triumph of human goodness; others have a clear and persistent vision of human's ultimate inhumanity.

On the last day of teaching Borowski's stories, read aloud the last pages of the introduction by Jan Kott, from the passage on page 21 beginning, "Borowski's Auschwitz stories are written in the first person." Through Kott's words, students are able to see the totality of the stories and comprehend a life that is destined to end in suicide.

As they look ahead to reading Mr. Sammler's Planet or Sophie's Choice or another work of post-Holocaust fiction, or to hearing testimony from the small remnant of survivors, the experience of reading This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen must remind them that most of the people who were victims of the Holocaust did not survive. It is a grim but necessary lesson.

Post-Holocaust Fiction: An Introduction to the Teacher

One of the questions that confronts teachers of secondary-school students is the suitability of teaching works of proven literary worth that have in them scenes of explicit sexuality which are thus either openly offensive or ineffective because of their supposition that readers have had enough experience to place them in context. This is the case with Mr. Sammler's Planet which also contains examples of "enlighted racism" that must be carefully explained.

Nonetheless, if we are examining the literature of the Holocaust and following Alvin Rosenfeld's reasoned argument that the literature presents a "recognizable shift in being," then the question as to why authors increasingly include, as heroes or central figures in their books, survivors of the Holocaust who are, after all, one of the tiniest minorities on earth, needs to be examined. That is the reason for teaching Bellow's book.[17]

Although I have taught Mr. Sammler's Planet and am including some notes on its teaching, the course might do well to end with This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen. If we have done our job well, students will have learned enough by this point to deal with the post-Holocaust literature on their own when they confront it.

Students often ask me why I do not include in the course, especially in the light of their difficulty in reading Mr. Sammler's Planet, the more accessible novel Sophie's Choice by William Styron. Although it has been both a very popular book and a very popular film, I consider it to be an inappropriate response to the Holocaust because it uses a great human tragedy to no moral purpose; it titillates the imagination; it shocks readers into recognition of Sophie's horrible dilemma, and it makes an unworthy connection between brutality and sexuality.

This opens, of course, the larger question about "art" which has been raised about "fictionalizing" the Holocaust. Because it has been my experience that students who read this literature in addition to studying the history have a much greater awareness of the complexity of human experience, human response, and human morality than those who read about battles and dates and even about camps, I see in the fiction enormous worth. Because of its importance in helping me form this viewpoint, I have included in an appendix an article by Professor John Felstiner of Stanford on this topic (see pp. 61).

---

[17] See also D. M. Thomas' The White Hotel, Philip Roth's Zuckerman Unbound and others.

Mr. Sammler's Planet First Assignment: Chapter 1 ff.

Our purpose in discussing this book is to discover why Saul Bellow, a Canadian-born, Chicago-based author who is not a survivor, chooses a Holocaust survivor as the hero of his book about the sixties in America.

We must begin by understanding Artur Sammler himself. By asking students, after they have read the first chapter, what they have learned about him, we see that in his belief in culture and education, his passivity, his generosity, his willingness to listen, his curiosity, his disability (he is one-eyed like so many "seers" of literature), and his sexual sterility, he represents a "caricature" of the Jewish man. The black man whom he encounters on the bus and in the lobby of his apartment house is a "caricature" of the same order: sexually potent, powerful, rich, agressive, incurious, vengeful. He stands as a contrast to Sammler: the old man versus the new rather than the old man versus the young. Students who are sensitive to racial issues need to be helped to see that the character of the black man is essentially positive, although he is a thief: he represents the world in which Sammler functions only cautiously.

Sammler, who has been educated to revere the values of the Enlightenment, freedom of choice and the power of reason, has lived through an era of direct and horrible contrast to these values: the Holocaust. During this period he himself has killed a man, and has "lived" as a dead man, in a mass grave, and in a mausoleum. When he is reborn into the sixties, he sees the values of the Enlightenment gone crazy: freedom carried to its extreme threatens to destroy reason. Reason has a new rhetoric which says even the mysteries need to be examined. Sammler (and the reader as audience) is forced to listen, therefore, to the most detailed and grotesque tales of sexual behavior, all told in the name of "choice" and "reason."

Once I have set the above guidelines with students, I ask them to examine what they think a survivor of the Holocaust, coming upon this disrupted world, would think. It is at this point that we remember Borowski's narrator, the ultimately disillusioned Tadeusz, in order to see what response Artur Sammler will make to Professor Govnida Lal's desire to colonize the moon. Colonize another planet, when this one is so devastated? Offer another chance for mankind to wreak havoc? Where Tadeusz says no, Artur Sammler says yes.

Mr. Sammler's Planet Sixth Assignment: Chapter 6

After the opening session with this book, I allow students to confront it on their own. The narrative is not difficult to follow; there is little actual "action," and it is primarily Artur Sammler's philosophy, which is not fully realized until the end of the book, that needs discussion. On the intervening days we have history lectures, films, and do other class business.

On the sixth day, we examine two speeches made by Artur Sammler, one in Chapter 5 where he gives "My Views," and the other the eulogy for his nephew Elya Gruner which he makes silently at the end of the book.

In his "views" in response to Dr. Lal's inquiry, Sammler presents his notion of hope for humankind in what he calls "adumbration," the proof by the shadow of something else, that there are better, continuing possibilities for mankind. He speaks of knowing that he has been "marked for death" (and in this is his special existence as a survivor) and that, because of knowing the depth of human degradation, he can also see the heights. He cautions patience. The ideas of free choice, he says, have been turned into "an orgy of originality," but, in such an insistence on individuality, truth is not extended. Finally he says that one can only live "by willing as God wills." "The spirit," he says, "knows that its growth is the real aim of existence."

I ask students to assume that there is a God and explore what they want God to do for them. They can see that the fact of Auschwitz might deny the existence of a God who "can do something for them" but at the same time they can also see the truth of Sammler's idea: that humans exist only to see what God wills. This concept of God as "becoming" rather than "being" is a difficult one but worthy of examination.

Finally we discuss Sammler's view of Elya. Elya's life, with his Mafia connections and desire to make money, does not measure up to Sammler's enlightenment standards, yet Elya is the man who represents the possibility of human love.

On the seventh day, we rest.

Films

These films are especially suited for use with the literature in this curriculum. There are many other fine films about the Holocaust, and catalogues and filmographies are readily available. One source is:

The Center for Holocaust Studies
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
823 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
(212) 490-2525

The sources listed for these films are from Annette Insdorf's Indelible Shadows: Films and the Holocaust. Also check with your school library or audio-visual department.

1. "Night and Fog" (Nuit et Bruillard) France, 1955. Directed by Alain Resnais. Screenplay by Jean Cayrol.
   Resource: Images Film Archive, 300 Phillips Park Road, Mamaroneck, NY 10543
   Subtitles (31 minutes).

Annette Insdorf calls this "the most powerful film on the concentration camp experience."[18] A combination of contemporary images of the empty Auschwitz of today with documentary footage (taken by the Germans) of roomsful of hair, roomsful of glasses, roomsful of wedding rings, and of seventy-pound grown men laboring in the camp, the film is powerfully narrated by actor Michel Bouquet, quietly recalling events and bearing witness.

This film is so moving that I ask students to finish class time by writing in their journals rather than speaking. During the next class meeting, I use Professor Insdorf's commentary to answer their factual questions, but we spend most of the time sharing our responses.

Because this film too uses a metaphor of "night," it has an obvious connection with Elie Wiesel's book, and I usually show it after students have read the novel. If I had only one film to show in any course on the Holocaust, this would be my first choice. (See writing assignments.)

---

[18]Annette Insdorf, Indelible Shadows: Films and the Holocaust (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1983).

Films cont'd

2. "The Holocaust Remembered," Jerusalem, 1983. Produced by Joel A. Levitch of Jason Films for The World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors. Resource: Public Broadcasting Service (60 minutes).

The film is a documentary presentation of the first gathering of world Holocaust survivors and focuses particularly on the reasons survivors wanted to come to Israel for this event. It is an excellent film to show at the beginning of a course on any aspect of the Holocaust. It establishes an appropriate mood without being overly sentimental; it documents the thoughts of many survivors as they attended the world gathering; it presents nothing shocking or brutal.

3. "The Shop on Main Street" (Obchod na Korze). Czechoslovakia, 1965. Directed by Jan Kadar and Elmar Klos. Screenplay by Ladislav Grosman. Resource: Films, Incorporated. 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016 Subtitles (128 minutes)

Aside from being an exquisite example of the film-maker's art, this story of a bumbling jack-of-all-trades, Tono Britko, who is named the "Aryan Controller" of the worthless shop of a senile Jewish widow during the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, teaches many lessons. It shows the possibility for individual choice, for righteousness even in the most humble man, and it also calls attention to the plight of the Jewish communities in the small towns of Eastern Europe.

Because the film ends in the death of its hero by his own hand, it makes an excellent comparison with The Last of the Just. Although it is a long film, requiring many class periods for the viewing, it is well worth it. My first viewing of it made me aware that the round-ups of Jews did not take place only in bleak surroundings but in sunny town squares, with bands playing in the background and business as usual in the shops. (See writing assignments.)

Films cont'd

4. "Kitty: Return to Auschwitz." Great Britain, 1980. TV (Yorkshire Television). Directed by Peter Morley.
   Resource: Public Broadcasting Service (90 minutes).

We first meet Kitty, a radiologist in Birmingham, England, as she calmly explains her background and the trip she is going to take to Auschwitz, where she was interned at the age of sixteen, to show her son David in 1978 what she saw in 1943. The director said, "Nothing was staged. I just followed her and didn't even know--when the taxi arrived at Auschwitz--whether she'd turn right back and leave."[19]

The emotional disintegration in Kitty's narration as she proceeds backwards in time is the most striking element of this film. She talks more and more rapidly, insisting on showing David what she cannot really show because it is not there, but the word-pictures she paints are so vivid that we see it with her.

This film works well in conjunction with any reading, but it is particularly suitable to show with This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen. Under Kitty's beautiful, unperturbed exterior is the same knowledge that informs the narrator of Borowski's stories: the knowledge of horror so deep that we are surprised at the thinness of the veneer that covers it.

5. "Moral Development." 1973. Developments in Psychology Today Series, University of Wisconsin.
   Resource: McGraw-Hill Films (28 minutes).

In trying to determine what makes people behave in undesirable ways, psychologist Stanley Milgram of the City University of New York devised an experiment in which people were asked to administer electric shock to an unknown victim. This film simulates the experiments with commentary describing the procedure and discussing a series of postulated stages of moral development.

In discussing any aspect of the Holocaust, students should almost always consider the unasked question: what would I have done? Most often, they ask this question as victim, but this film helps them to observe another aspect of human behavior: that of perpetrator.

Because the film is a simulation, students sometimes want to focus on some trivial inconsistencies in the film rather than the issue of moral behavior which is harder to contemplate, so the leader of such a discussion needs to be a bit wary. Nonetheless, this is a valuable lesson, and journal entries following the showing of this film (which works either at the beginning or the end of a course) show its impact.

---

[19]Insdorf, pp. 193-4.

Speakers

The number of survivors of the Holocaust is relatively small; obviously they are aging, and testimony from them is therefore especially precious. In many communities, oral histories are being carefully preserved; at Yale University, for example, there is a program for videotaping this material and in time, these videotapes may be available.

The visit of a survivor to a classroom is a uniquely enriching experience. Perhaps because they know that they are telling their story and passing on history directly to interested young people, they are candid and generous with information which must be painful to recall.

It is useful to talk first with whoever is coming to the classroom to tell her or him the nature of the course and perhaps to share some of the questions students have asked. If you have videotaping facilities, a visitor might be willing to have the interview taped; in that way you would preserve history against the time when no one is left to tell the story first-hand.

If there is no Jewish Community Center nearby, you might call a local synagogue to find someone willing to speak to your students. Sometimes students themselves have connections with people who have been reluctant to speak or who have never been asked; there is considerable evidence from the children of survivors that silence on the subject has been maintained, but that sometimes an invitation to speak can break that silence.

If you cannot find a speaker, there are several alternative options. One is to show the film "The Holocaust Remembered." Another is to contact the Holocaust Media Project of the Holocaust Library and Research Center of San Francisco, 639 14th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94118. They have produced an audiotape entitled "Holocaust Survivors Forty Years Later" (30 minutes) which is a moving document of interviews with several people.

If you are fortunate enough to have more than one speaker, it is useful to ask students to make some evaluations of what the speakers have in common; this is the beginning of training students in oral history methodology.

Caution students to remember that the survivors are only a tiny remnant of those who underwent this horror. We are sometimes so impressed with their courage in speaking that we tend to think everyone's experience ended this way. For at least six million men, women, and children, it did not.

Writing Assignments (Journals, Papers, Tests and Exams)

1. Journals have a particular value in this course as students think seriously about issues of personal morality, fear and anxiety, and questions raised by their reading when no one is there to answer them. I try to give students a chance to write in their journals during the last five minutes of class; after seeing a film like "Night and Fog," such an exercise is almost a necessity.

Because my classes have been small, I have been able to conduct, at least twice in the term, a photo-coyping session: everyone chooses an anonymous page from his/her journal, lines up outside the photo-copying room, and allows me to copy it. I then collate the pages and give a set to every student so that they have some idea about the thinking that is perhaps not being shared in class time, or that agrees or disagrees with theirs. Looking together at these collections always makes for an interesting class.

As any experienced teacher knows, the question of whether to require uniform journal form, whether to collect, whether to respond, whether, indeed, to grade, must be a matter of individual choice.

2. Writing topics for individual books and films

Five Short Stories

Choose one story and discuss the way in which the author makes use of the narrative point of view to engage the reader. (2 pages)

Night

What are the meanings of the word "night" in the novel? Support your discussion with examples from the text. (3-5 pages)

"Night and Fog"

A personal response paper (2 pages)

The Last of the Just and "The Shop on Main Street"

Both Andre Schwarz-Bart and Ladislav Grossman, who wrote the novel on which the film is based, deal with the notion of martyrdom. Are both Ernie Levy and Tono Britko martyrs? How do their portrayers create the situations in which each takes his own life? What are the similarities between them? What are the differences?

Please add an afterword to your paper considering the efficacy or even the possibility of martyrdom. Why do people create martyrs in their fiction? Does martyrdom do any good? Are there actual martyrs? If not, why has the idea persisted in this and other literature?

Writing Assignments cont'd

The Diary of Anne Frank

See the alternative lesson plan for some suggested writing.

This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen

Choose one story and discuss the theme of Borowski's writing and the methodology he uses. (3-5 pages)

This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen and "Kitty: Return to Auschwitz"

Kitty narrates her own story as "Tadeusz" narrates his. What are the similarities and differences between the spoken and written narrations? (3-5 pages)

For History Lectures. See two quizzes and a test question at the end of the material in the Appendix, pp. 45.

Special Note: In San Francisco, there is a Holocaust Memorial Monument as there is in Los Angeles and New York and as there soon will be in Washington, DC, and perhaps in other cities. In some museums, there is art of the period. I have asked students to respond to the memorial here in one of three ways:

a. As a critic of the effectiveness of the memorial as art.

b. As a journalist who visits the work and reports what she/he observes.

c. In a creative mode, i.e., a poem, a painting, a photograph, a musical composition.

d. Any combination of the above.

Mr. Sammler's Planet

Why does Saul Bellow choose to make the hero of his book a survivor of the Holocaust? (3-5 pages)

In observing closely Mr. Sammler's philosophy in Chapter 5, do you agree or disagree with his contention that "individualism is of no interest whatever if it does not extend truth"? (3-5 pages)

Writing Assignments cont'd

Possible Final Exam Questions

1. Please ask one of the questions that we posted on the wall when the course began and answer it by telling what you thought about it then, what you think about it now, and, if possible, giving some of the sources that contributed to your thinking (history lectures, reading, films, survivors' testimony, etc.). 45 minutes (with advance preparation)

2. Michael Wyschogrod has said,

> I firmly believe that art is not appropriate to the Holocaust. Art takes the sting out of suffering.... It is therefore forbidden to make fiction of the Holocaust....Any attempt to transfer the Holocaust into art demeans the Holocaust and must result in poor art.[19]

Please respond to this statement using examples from the imaginative literature we have read this term. 60 minutes

3. If you had only one book or one film to teach about the Holocaust, which one would you choose and why? 15 minutes

4. The history of the years between 1933 and 1945 is one told by survivors; yet the true story lies with those who did not survive. Their story is even more devastating. What are some of the techniques used by authors to make us aware of the magnitude of their deaths? 60 minutes

5. What do you remember of the salient points of the testimony of the survivor(s) who spoke to us? 15 minutes

---

[19]Michael Wyschogrod, "Some Theological Reflections on the Holocaust," Response 25:68 (Spring, 1975) cited in Rosenfeld, A Double Dying, p. 16.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Texts:

Bellow, Saul. Mr. Sammler's Planet. New York: Penguin Books, 1978.

Borowski, Tadeusz. This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen. Translated by Barbara Vedder. New York: Penguin Books, 1976.

Frank, Anne. The Diary of a Young Girl. Translated by B. M. Moovaart-Doubleday. New York: Pocket Books, 1952.

Friedlander, Albert, ed. Out of the Whirlwind: A Reader of Holocaust Literature. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.

Goodrich, Frances, and Hackett, Albert. The Diary of Anne Frank. New York: Random House, 1956.

Litvinoff, Emanuel, ed. The Penguin Book of Jewish Short Stories. New York: Penguin Books, 1979.

Perrine, Lawrence, ed. Story and Structure. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983.

Schnable, Ernst. Anne Frank: A Portrait in Courage. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. New York: Harcourt Brace, Harbrace Paperback Library, 1958. (Out of print)

Strom, Margot Stern and Parsons, William, ed. Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior. Watertown, MA: Intentional Educations, 1982.

Schwarz-Bart, Andre. The Last of the Just. New York: Atheneum, 1961.

Wiesel, Elie. Night. Translated by Stella Rodway. New York: Hill and Wang, 1960.

Other:

Coger, Leslie and White, Melvin. Readers Theatre Handbook: A Dramatic Approach to Literature. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1982.

Dawidowicz, Lucy. The War against the Jews 1933-1945. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975.

Ezrahi, Sidra DeKoven. By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Insdorf, Annette. Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust. New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1983.

Rosenfeld, Alvin H. A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.
(The Rosenfeld book has an excellent selected bibliography of Holocaust literature and some of its attendant historical and interpretive material, up to 1980.)

Roth, Philip. Zuckerman, Unbound. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981.

Styron, William. Sophie's Choice. New York: Random House, 1982.

Thomas, D. M. The White Hotel. New York: Viking Press, 1981.

Appendix A

Germany: Nationalism, Militarism, and the Holocaust

Ten Lectures on Germany (1740-1945)

(Approximately fifteen minutes each)

With Quiz and Test Questions

Prepared by

Mark S. Popofsky
Class of 1986
San Francisco University High School

This series of ten lectures is intended to give students an understanding of the German "national character," the roots of modern Germany, and the preconditions for the rise of National Socialism. They may be used in any manner the instructor sees fit. The quizzes and test included are meant as a guide for examination questions that instructors may create.

Lecture I: Prussia through Frederick the Great: The Origins of German Militarism and the Growth of a German Nation (1740-1800)

Before 1740, Germany consisted of a loose confederation of small independent states known as the Holy Roman Empire. The strong Duchy of Prussia consisted of roughly the northeastern part of this area. The "Emperor" had no real power nor allegiance to the Pope, despite his title, for as Voltaire once said, the Holy Roman Empire was "neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire."

It was the Duchy of Prussia that was to become the nucleus of the German nation. Although small in area, Prussia became important as she made arrangements with larger states to lend out her well-trained army in exchange for territory. Thus, by 1740, Prussia emerged as a major force by playing off one nation against another, switching sides again and again to gain the optimum amount of territory.

The leader of Prussia in 1740 was the monarch Frederick II, or Frederick the Great (1740-1786). Frederick was known as an "Enlightened Despot" because he adhered to many of the reforming ideals of the European Enlightenment. Although Frederick tried to enact some liberal reforms such as freeing the serfs, he was always curtailed by the "Junkers," the rich land-owning noble classes. As a result, Prussia became a conservative nation in which the Junkers had great influence.

By 1740, Prussia had emerged as one of the largest states in Germany, with the best trained army. However, the states surrounding her (France, Austria, and Russia) saw the rising star of Prussia as a menace and tried to destroy and divide her. But Prussia acted first. In 1740, she invaded the Austrian province of Silesia and easily conquered it, and for the next seven years she held off attacks from the hostile powers surrounding her. As a result of the war, known as the War of Austrian succession, Prussia doubled in population and acquired much territory. However, Austria and her allies again declared war on Prussia in 1756. This Seven Year War lasted from 1756 to 1763, and Prussia survived attacks on all sides because of her excellent army and the superb leadership of Frederick the Great. A significant result of this war was that the military establishment became the most important institution in the state, and all structures, social and economic, came to be governed by the military. Thus, the national character of Prussia emerged as militaristic.

In the late eighteenth century, Prussia again turned to acquiring new territory, and in 1772 and 1793 participated in the carving up of Poland, expanding her borders to the east, adjacent to Russia. Thus, by 1800, Prussia had developed a very specific national character that embodied a military spirit, as well as achieving great territorial growth.

Lecture II: Napoleon, German Nationalism, and Revolution (1800-1850)

In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself Emperor of the French. This event was to have great repercussions for Prussia and the area to be known as Germany, for Napoleon was determined to export France's revolution. He began by conquering Prussia's southern neighbor, Austria, in 1805. In response to this aggression, Prussia declared war on France in 1806. But Prussia's army had not grown or developed technologically since the time of Frederick the Great, and the Prussian forces were quickly routed by the French.

The result of this defeat was the reorganization of Germany by the French, and the introduction into Prussia of Napoleon's codes and institutions. The major change in Germany's geography was the organization of most of Western Germany into what was known as the Confederation of the Rhine. Under the leadership of Metternicht, this was the first real German state, containing territories from many different provinces of the now shattered Holy Roman Empire. As a result of the formation of a German state, and as a response against the internationalism of Napoleon, a spirit of German nationalism began to grow. Several philosophers led this crusade and became the forebears of the German nation. The first was Herder (1747-1803), who was known as "the father of the German nation." Herder said that each people had a national spirit, called volksgeist, and, since different peoples had different spirits, they thus needed distinct nations. This call for a German nation was further developed by Fichte (1762-1814), who held that not only was the German character distinct from that of other peoples but that it was superior. However, despite the pleas from Herder and Fichte for the creation of a true nation, Germany remained occupied by France until 1813 when Russia drove the French out. During this war of liberation, the German states of Austria and Prussia, stirred in part by the beliefs of Herder and Fichte, rebelled against Napoleon and aided in his ultimate defeat in 1815.

In the peace settlement in Vienna after Napoleon's defeat in 1815, Prussia gained vast amounts of territory in the west as well as regaining some lost territory in the east. More importantly, however, the basic reorganization of western Germany remained, which led to greater internal security for Prussia which was able to absorb many small states. As a response to this growth in national power and the concurrent growth of the power of Prussia's monarchy and the Junker ruling class, liberalism also began to grow in Germany, influenced by developments elsewhere in Western Europe. Because of her powerful army, Germany was able to suppress these liberals, and thus Germany remained essentially conservative.

After the defeat of Napoleon, German nationalism blossomed as Prussia grew in power. Again, two philosophers led the way. The philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) argued that, in order to enjoy freedom, one must have an independent, strong state. Hegel also championed the dialectic, the essence of which was the belief that German disunity would necessarily lead to the concept of German unity, which would result in the creation of a German nation. The philosopher Ranke (1795-1886) was more radical than Hegel, holding that Germans needed to develop a pure Germanic state to demonstrate the superiority of the German people. In response to teachings such as these, nationalistic organizations sprang up in Germany. One such organization was the "Burschenschaft," or youth groups, which participated in nationalistic

rallies and activities and supported the unification of the two Germanic states of Austria and Prussia. However, the Austrians, led by Metternicht, saw these groups as a threat to Austria's independence and suppressed them. Another organization was the "Zollverein," the customs union developed in 1818, which included most of what was to become modern Germany.

Even though Prussia was able to suppress liberalism to a large extent by the use of its army, the rest of Europe exploded in the liberal revolutions in 1848, and Germany was not immune to their effect. The nature of these revolutions was republican, meaning that the workers and students participating in them wanted representative and liberal governments installed. The revolution started in Paris and quickly spread to Vienna and Berlin. Because of the initial success and shock of the revolution, the King of Prussia, Frederick-Wilhelm IV, promised that a constitution would be implemented. However, the workers were disorganized and the army was effective, and by 1849, the rebellion was largely suppressed all over Germany. In the meantime, liberal delegates from all the Germanic states had met at the city of Frankfurt to try to draft a liberal constitution and create a liberal government for Germany. They offered their plan to King Frederick-Wilhelm but were refused because the powerful Junkers would not allow their own power to be curtailed. Later, the Prussian Army forcefully broke up the Frankfurt Assembly, and liberalism was again suppressed in Germany. Frederick did draft a constitution in 1850 that allowed for some elections, but the nation remained conservative.

Thus, by 1850, Germany had developed a national character that was embodied by militaristic, illiberal Prussia. But it still was disunified over social issues and the matter of national government. It was thus left to mighty Prussia to create the German nation.

Lecture III: Bismarck and the Founding of a German Empire (1850-1871)

After the revolutions of 1848 failed, due to lack of planning and real power on the part of the liberal leaders, Germans became obsessed with power, "die Macht." From 1850 to 1870, Germany grew tremendously. Iron and coal production increased sixfold; railroads and telegraphs linked German cities, and the population of Prussia grew from eleven to eighteen million.

During the 1860's, the liberal but weak Prussian Parliament had refused to increase the size of the army in defiance of the Junkers; thus in 1862, the king appointed Otto von Bismarck chief minister of Parliament. Bismarck was very conservative, pro-Junker, and anti-liberal, stressing duty, service, and order over democracy and liberalism. To Bismarck, unifying Germany would be to strengthen Prussia, and Bismarck set out to build Prussia into Germany. He circumvented Parliament and collected taxes for the army without that ineffective body's consent. The army was reorganized, retrained, and re-equipped. Bismarck then declared Prussia's convoluted boundaries to be inadequate and determined to make them "more acceptable." His doctrine was expressed in his statement, "not by speeches and majority votes are the great issues of the day decided...but by blood and iron."

Bismarck went to war to achieve his aims. Denmark controlled the two partly Germanic provinces of Schleswig and Holstein, and Prussia was determined to bring them under Germanic rule. Prussia convinced Austria to join the war against Denmark in 1864, and they crushed the Danes. However, in dividing up the conquered territory, border disputes arose, and Bismarck turned on Austria and other northern German states in 1866. Prussia's army again prevailed, and in 1867 Prussia defeated Austria and virtually annexed all of northern Germany. Thus Bismarck had partially completed his dream of creating a pan-German nation.

However, Prussia was now seen as a menace by the rest of Europe. France, under Louis Napoleon (III) Bonaparte, had difficulties at home and needed a glorious victory. So, in 1870, France declared war on Germany as a result of a royal insult concocted by the French. Prussia's army invaded and totally destroyed the French armies, captured Napoleon III, and encircled Paris. With the fall of Paris in 1871, the southern German states came under Prussian control as well as the partly Germanic French province of Alsace-Lorraine, and the King of Prussia was crowned the Emperor of Germany at Versailles. Thus the strong German Empire was created, dominated by Prussia, Prussia's army, and the Junkers.

Lecture IV: The Rise and Dissolution of the German Empire (1871-1919)

From 1871 to 1890, many changes took place in the government of the German Empire. The government was still dominated by the Junkers, but the Parliament, or Reichstag, gave the illusion of democracy. The Reichstag did have some influence, so it had to be reckoned with, and Bismarck, conservative as he was, had to win the support of the liberals (the bourgeoisie) to help consolidate his power. With their support, he was able to suppress the Catholics, eradicate the Socialists, and pass social legislation to appease the workers. Despite his success, at the age of seventy-five, in 1890, Bismarck was forced to resign by the new twenty-nine year-old Kaiser Wilhelm. Under Wilhelm, Germany was set on a new course which changed the focus of German interests from internal to external. Wilhelm supported aggressive colonialism and limited growth in the power of the democratic Reichstag. However, Wilhelm made sure that the army was still in control, and thus Germany remained conservative.

During the late 1800's, Europe was virtually an armed camp, with large standing armies the norm in almost every country. Germany, which had undergone industrialization later than Britain and France, wanted to share in the latter's economic and military strength and glory. To this end, the Kaiser let the peace treaties created by Bismarck expire, and Europe became divided into two camps, the Franco-Russian Entente and the Austro-Italian-German alliance. In order to protect its possessions and territories, Germany built up a navy to counter France and this act infuriated England who now saw Germany as a threat to England's naval supremacy. This gradually pushed England into France's camp.

The result of this division of Europe was conflict. The first occurred in the French province of Morocco where a German warship landed and requested that Morocco be given independence from the "exploitative French." This crisis passed, but it did serve to increase the tension between the two blocs. The next crisis did not pass. It occurred in the Balkans, where, in Sarajevo, in the Austrian province of Bosnia in June of 1914, the heir to the Austrian throne, the Archduke Ferdinand, was assassinated by a Bosnian nationalist group supported by neighboring Serbia. In retaliation, and because aggressive Serbia was seen as a threat, Austria declared war on Serbia; Russia, allied with Serbia, declared war on Austria. Germany, in alliance with Austria, then declared war on Russia, and, since Germany knew France would come to Russia's aid, also declared war on France. Belgium was invaded by Germany as an avenue for attacking France. Finally, this invasion of the neutral nation of Belgium brought England into the war on the side of the Entente. World War I had begun.

The war lasted over four years, and consumed millions of men on both sides. It was extremely bloody because of trench warfare, in which men were literally mowed down as they attacked. Large gains were made only by the Germans on the Russian front, and Russia was forced to surrender because of its internal revolution in 1917. But a few months later, America entered the war against Germany and sealed her fate. Germany, bled white by the war and starved by the Allied blockade, agreed to an armistice (not a surrender) in November 1918. As a result, Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated and fled into Holland, and the stage was set for peace.

The peace conference was held by all the warring powers (except Russia) at Versailles, France, in 1919. Even though Germany had not surrendered, the Entente was able to impose conditions by threatening to resume the war, which would have crushed Germany instantly. The provisions of the peace treaty that affected Germany were as follows:

--Germany lost the province of Alsace-Lorraine which she took from France in 1870;

--Germany was forced to scrap her armed forces, except for a police-force army of 100,000 men;

--Germany lost all her colonies;

--Germany had to pay billions of dollars in reparations;

--Germany bore the entire blame for instigating the war;

--Germany was forced to set up a new democratic government.

In the eyes of Germans, the Peace of Versailles was very unfair, and it caused the German people to eventually clamor for someone to lead them in a war of revenge.

Lecture V: The Weimar Republic and Italian Fascism (1919-1933)

The democracy set up in Germany, known as the Weimar Republic, was dominated by the Social Democratic party and other liberals; it was democratic and constitutional and held elections with universal suffrage. The Junkers, although without legal power, did have influence as they virtually controlled all German industry. The army was kept small and under firm control. This government was so liberal that in this period there were even two Jewish Chancellors.

However, the Weimar government was weak, in part because the government was unable to stop the Allies from taking all their reparations. These indemnities consisted of thirty-five billion dollars. Germany, shattered by the First World War, could not afford to pay all of it, and Britain dropped its demands. But France did not, and, by 1923, half of all Germany's income went to reparations. In this year, the German economy broke down under the strain, and the French occupied Germany's industrial heartland in the Ruhr to try to force the Germans to continue payment. Germany complied by simply printing money which led to a great inflation that resulted in a trillion German marks becoming equivalent to one dollar! As a result, many people's life savings were wiped out, and thus the German people lost faith in their society and the Weimar government.

The economic system of Germany was entirely revamped in the mid-1920's as the French finally cut their demands for reparations. In fact, Germany underwent a great period of prosperity until the world depression of 1929. This depression ushered in a new era in which the Weimar Republic, always a coalition government and thus indecisive and weak, was unable to stop street warfare between the Communists and the new Nazi party which ended in a Nazi takeover in 1933.

Meanwhile, in Italy, events were taking a different course. In 1922, during a depression, Benito Mussolini seized control of the Italian government and proclaimed a "facist" state. The term "facist" means a "bundle of sticks" and was a symbol of strength. Mussolini ruled by strength through his armed gangs of Blackshirts. In the early 1920's, Italy's government had been ineffective, and Mussolini offered his new system which was supposed to last for only one year. But during that one-year trial period, Mussolini consolidated his power and passed legislation that gave him dictatorial powers. Thus there was no government left to remove him, and he was left in complete control. Mussolini then went on to revamp the military, oppress the liberals, and rebuild Italy's economy by supporting economic cooperation between industrial barons. Despite its successes, Italian fascism was not meant to be a permanent system, only a stop-gap measure. Mussolini himself said that "fascism was not the nursling of a doctrine worked out beforehand with detailed elaboration; it was born of the need for action." The ultimate significance of Italian fascism was that it became the model for Hitler and National Socialism and replaced the weak Weimar government with a fascist government oriented towards power and force, "blood and iron."

Lecture VI: Hitler and National Socialism (1889-1934)

Adolf Hitler was born into a bourgeoise family in the Austrian border town of Branau am Inn in 1889. Young Adolf hated school and disliked Austria, considering himself to be a German. In his youth, he went to Vienna and was influenced by the antisemitism there. In Vienna, he failed to gain admittance to art school and wandered from odd job to job, barely eking out a living. In 1914, when war broke out, Hitler eagerly entered the German army. He was a good soldier, achieved the rank of corporal, and earned the Iron Cross second class. Once the war ended, he had no place to go and therefore stayed in the army.

In 1919, Hitler's unit was stationed in Munich, and during that period he attended many meetings of the various clubs and organizations based there, including the rightist Thule society, later renamed the DAP. The DAP consisted of about 1,500 members and was very racist. The leaders of the club admired Hitler's speaking ability and offered him one of the top posts in the organization. With Hitler's rousing speeches, the party membership grew rapidly and was renamed the NSDAP, or "Nazi" party, taking the ancient symbol of the swastika as its standard. During the 1920's, the party started its own private army. This was not unusual as virtually all political factions had private forces of hoodlums and gangs with which to fight each other for political domination of neighborhoods. The Nazi army was known as the SA and was commanded by a man named Ernst Rohm (pronounced Room); it was known as the Brown Shirts. In 1923, the Nazi party still had only about 6,000 members. But, with the economic collapse of that year, the party grew dramatically to 50,000 and the SA came to number 15,000. In the same year, Hitler formed an elite group of SA men to be his private body guard; they would become the nucleus of the SS.

During this period, when there was growing tension between the rising SA and the German army, Hitler decided that the time was ripe to stage an overthrow of the government and the army. On November 9, 1923, in what was known as the Beer Hall Putsch, 15,000 men led by Hitler and the German General Ludendorff began a march on Berlin from Munich. They were confronted by an army detachment and were routed in a brief and bloody engagement from which Hitler, in fact, ran away.

After the Putsch, many Nazi leaders were imprisoned. Hitler himself was convicted of treason but because of local pressure, served only a year in prison. It was during this period of imprisonment that Hitler wrote his most famous work, Mein Kampf, literally, "My Struggle," in which he discussed many of his racist ideas and developed his notion for the Nazi state. While Hitler was imprisoned, party membership dropped dramatically to 20,000 members. But, once out of prison in 1925, Hitler reasserted himself, making many tours of the country and giving many speeches. By 1928, the party had grown to 100,000 members. The Nazis then began to run for public office. In 1928, they gained 2.6% of the national vote, a small but still significant percentage, and won forty-two seats in the Reichstag. By 1929, the party had grown to 160,000 members and the SA to 100,000, thus achieving parity with the German army! In provincial elections the same year, the Nazis had about 7% of the vote and had become a powerful force in Germany. The remarkable success of Hitler lay in his appeal. Hitler and his beliefs embodied almost perfectly those values of the German character that have been discussed. Hitler wanted to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

create a government that would erase the shame of Versailles. He wanted to make Germany strong again and create the pure German state. Hitler used the various minorities in Germany, particularly the conspicuous Jews, as scapegoats for the nation's problems. Thus he created a combination that was perfect for that specific moment in history, and he seized upon the moment with a passion.

By 1930, the Nazis were ready to take the offensive and virtually declared open warfare in the streets against the Communists. In the elections of 1930, they captured 18% of the national election, over six million votes, and one hundred and seven seats in the Reichstag. The Nazis were now the largest single party and received defectors en masse from other parties; by 1932, their membership reached 400,000. Further gains were made in 1932, and, by the end of the year, the Nazi party consisted of half a million members, commanding about ten million votes. Hitler himself felt strong enough to run against President Hindenburg in 1932. Hindenburg won forty-nine percent and Hitler thirty percent, and in the runoff Hitler only received thirty-six percent of the vote and thus lost. Although the Nazis had lost their bid for control of the government, they were still a very powerful force in Germany.

The next big Nazi push came in the 1933 national elections in which the Nazis won forty percent of the vote. As a result, they were by far the largest political party, and Hitler was appointed Chancellor, putting the Nazis in control of the government. There were mass defections to the Nazi party and rival parties were so weakened that they were no longer able to resist the Nazi steam-roller. The Communists were especially hard hit and were all but destroyed in Germany. Hitler, now with a majority, proceeded to by-pass the German constitution and gained virtual dictatorial powers with which to put his programs into action. By 1934, the new facist regime had by and large brought Germany out of the depression.

But Hitler had not yet consolidated his power, for the SA, headed by Rohm, felt that they deserved some part in the government in return for doing the fighting for all those years. Threatened with an SA revolt, Hitler took action. On the night of June 30, 1934, Hitler's men killed many top SA leaders, and a few days later Hitler put Rohm to death. As a result, the SA was reduced in size, and Hitler's SS grew. As Mussolini once said, "After the revolution, there is always the question of the revolutionaries." When the last stumbling block to Hitler, the venerable President Hindenburg, died quietly in 1935, Hitler took his post and assumed complete control of Germany.

Thus, by 1933 Hitler had consolidated his power, destroyed rival factions, and seduced into fascism a Germany that was ready to follow his will.

Lecture VII: The Twilight Years (1935-1939)

Once Hitler had consolidated his power within Germany, he shifted his focus to external affairs. His first triumph was to get the League of Nations mandate over the Saar returned to Germany. Hitler then proceeded to rebuild the armed forces in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. (He expanded it to 550,000 men.) He also negotiated an agreement with England by which Germany was allowed a limited rebuilding of its navy. He also secretly rebuilt the airforce and sent it to train in Russia, which had not been involved in the Versailles treaty. During this period, Mussolini began to be influenced by Hitler who supported Mussolini during Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. In 1936, Hitler marched the German army into the Rhineland, again in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

Hitler was able to engage in these activities because the post-war League of Nations was weak and indecisive while France and Britain had domestic difficulties of their own. Hitler aided the fascists in the Spanish Civil War which began in 1936, formed the Rome-Berlin Axis the same year, and, in 1938, invaded Austria, meeting no resistance from the frightened population. The western democracies put their foot down only when Hitler demanded that Czechoslovakia hand over to Germany a border region, the Sudetenland, containing three million Germans. Negotiations ended in the Munich Agreement when the powers (except Czechoslovakia, who was represented by the French) agreed to the German annexation of the Sudetenland if the Germans guaranteed that this was their last demand. The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, proudly declared that he had brought "peace in our time."

Chamberlain was wrong. Hitler proceeded to swallow up the rest of Czechoslovakia in 1939 and then demanded that Poland hand over the Polish corridor that divided Germany in two. Poland refused, and Hitler invaded on September 1st, 1939. Britain and France declared war two days later. World War II had begun.

During the period from 1935 through 1939, the persecution of the Jews in Germany began in earnest. From 1935 through 1937, Hitler had begun openly to arouse antisemitic feelings and encouraged and implemented harsh treatment of the Jews. One event that helped Hitler was the shooting of a German Minister in Paris by a Jewish-German refugee on November 9, 1938. This sparked a wave of antisemitism in Germany known as "Kristalnacht" or the night of broken glass, in which synagogues were burned, shops destroyed, and a hundred Jews killed with 29,000 injured. Hitler also legislated his beliefs, enacting the Nurenburg laws in 1935 which restricted Germany's 600,000 Jews:

--Jews were forbidden to marry "Aryans," or people with German blood;
--Jews lost the right to German citizenship which they had gained under Napoleon and were considered to be Germans of "alien" blood;
--Jews could not employ female domestic help under the age of 45;
--Jews could not fly the German flag.

A Jew was also defined by law: if one had three or four Jewish grandparents one was considered a full Jew; two Jewish grandparents meant that one was a mischling, first degree; and one Jewish grandparent meant that one was a mischling, second degree. As a result of these developments, Jewish emigration from Germany, which had dropped off after the shock of Hitler's takeover subsided, dramatically increased until World War II broke out. Out of 600,000 German Jews, 319,000 escaped but only 218,000 to countries eventually not to be occupied by Germany.

Lecture VIII: The Second War (1939-1945)

(This lecture should briefly recapitulate the military history of World War II in Europe with an emphasis on Hitler's change of focus from west to east and the brutality of the war in Russia against the civilian population.)

Lecture IX: The War Against the Jews (1939-1945)

In early 1942, the leaders of the SS met with Hitler at Wannsee, outside Berlin, to discuss the "Jewish question." It was decided that Europe was to be cleansed of Jews, but the machinery for the destruction had already been in place since 1939. When the Nazis occupied a conquered country, there were distinct phases in their handling of the Jews. The first phase was the occupation itself. The next stage consisted of the formation, by the Nazis, of Jewish Councils consisting of Jewish community leaders and rabbis. The Germans used these councils to put through their anti-Jewish decrees and to organize the deportations. Next, was the singling out of Jews by making them wear the Star of David. After that, Jews were banned from many areas of society and, as in Poland, were often physically separated into ghettos. Finally, came the deportations of the Jews to the labor and concentration camps.

In Poland, after the German occupation in 1939, the country's Jews were forced into large cities, and ghettos were established in 1940-1941. Mass deportations to the camps began in 1942, and liquidation of the ghettos was accomplished in 1943-4. Only 250,000 out of 3,300,000 Polish Jews survived.

In the Soviet Union and the Baltic States, there were no deportations. The Einsatzgruppen, or special-killing SS police forces, murdered en masse 1,300,000 Jews. Over one million survived because of the ultimate failure of the German attack.

In Hungary, with 650,000 Jews at the outbreak of war, German pressures were successfully resisted (even though Hungary was a German ally) until the country was occupied by the Nazis in 1944. Despite protests, 450,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz.

In Roumania, 300,000 out of 600,000 Jews were deported and killed. Bulgaria defied Germany, and only 14,000 of 64,000 Jews were killed.

German occupation of Yugoslavia and Greece did not give the Jews a chance. 26,000 of 43,000 Yugoslavian Jews were killed, and 60,000 out of 70,000 in Greece, the majority from the city of Salonika.

90,000 of 865,000 French Jews were killed, most of whom were foreign refugees. The French-puppet government (Vichy) was more than willing to assist the Germans, one of the most tragic episodes of World War II.

In Belgium, 40,000 out of 65,000 Jews were killed, again as a result of direct German occupation. In Luxembourg, 1,000 of 5,000 Jews were killed. Of the rest, over 2,500 were evacuated to France and Portugal, and over 900 survived in Luxembourg.

Direct German occupation of the Netherlands began in 1940, and deportation began in 1942. 105,000 out of 140,000 Dutch Jews were killed.

Italy was not occupied by Germany until late 1943, and only 8,000 out of 40,000 Jews were killed as a result.

900 out of 1,800 Norwegian Jews were killed. The rest escaped into Sweden with the help of the Resistance.

All but a handful of the 8,000 Danish Jews were evacuated to Sweden in 1943, a triumph of the Resistance.

Finland resisted all German pressures, with all 2,000 Jews surviving the war.

Out of the 600,000 German Jews, 131,800 were killed, the rest having fled beforehand or survived. In Austria, to which many German Jews had fled, about 70,000 were killed, a grand total of about 200,000 of the Germanic Jews remaining in their home countries.

Since Czechoslovakia had been under German occupation since 1939, the Jews had no chance. 150,000 out of 180,000 Jews were killed.

The total of Jews killed by the Nazis in Europe: 6,000,000 out of 9,000,000.

Lecture X: The Nuremburg Trials (1945-6)

The Nuremburg War Crime Trials lasted from October 1945 to October 1946. There were four types of crimes cited: crimes against peace (i.e., participating in the higher levels of the operation of the war); crimes against humanity (i.e., the Holocaust); war crimes (i.e., the killing of prisoners of war), and conspiring to commit one of the above crimes. The Tribunal was made up of representatives from the four allied countries (the USSR, France, Great Britain, and the United States) and handed down twenty-four indictments of the German war criminals. Of those twenty-four, three were acquitted, one was too sick to stand trial, twelve were sentenced to death by hanging (including Herman Goering), three to life imprisonment (including Rudolf Hess), four to various prison terms (such as Donitz and Albert Speer), and one commited suicide before the trial.

Many people in charge of the killings declared that they were "just following orders" and, when asked why they did not try to stop the killings, said that they would have been killed or replaced. Thus, the war criminals tried to shift the blame onto Hitler and his officers, many of whom had commited suicide or had been hanged or some of whom, such as Adolf Eichman, Klaus Barbi, and Joseph Mengele had escaped. The Nuremburg trials revealed to the world the horror of the Holocaust, shocking mankind into taking action against those who instigated the "war against the Jews." The principle that emerged as a result of the trials holds that human beings are responsible for stopping moral wrongs at whatever personal cost..

Quizzes and Test

Quiz #1 (to be used after Lecture Three):

How did the ideas of German Nationalism and the "Volksgeist" contribute to the creation of a German nation by 1871? Be sure to support general statements with specific examples and historical figures.

Quiz #2 (to be used after Lecture Six):

State three provisions of the 1919 Peace of Versailles and show how each of those three provisions acted as a catalyst for the rise of Hitler and Nazi Germany.

Test (to be used after the completion of the series):

We have now surveyed the course of German history from the age of Frederick the Great to the collapse of the Third Reich, and you are now armed with an understanding of that history as well as an understanding of the factors that shaped the German character. In light of these insights, what factors do you believe caused the Holocaust, and what factors do you believe could have prevented it?

Appendix B

"Reprinted by permission of THE NEW REPUBLIC, (c) 1984, The New Republic, Inc."

Reconsideration: Paul Celan

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A POEM

BY JOHN FELSTINER

VERY FEW lyric poems in this century have cut so deeply into consciousness and into conscience as to become historical agents themselves, provoking, dividing, and reshaping opinion, accumulating a biography of their own. A poem rarely has the effect of a judicial precedent or scientific experiment, upsetting assumptions and forcing new choices. Neruda's "United Fruit Co.," Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar" come to mind, though they remain linked to their occasions. Owen's "Dulce et decorum est," Yeats's "Easter 1916" reach beyond their occasions. Yet I know of no lyric that might touch us so radically as Paul Celan's *Todesfuge*, "Deathfugue" (1944-45).

This poem gradually became a *cause célèbre* during the 1950s and 1960s. *Schwarze Milch der Fruhe wir trinken sie Abends*, "Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening": to mention Paul Celan would instantly evoke this opening line, which caught the Jews' unspeakable plight in a strikingly spoken metaphor, and in so doing, gave German readers a frisson of understanding that was not always earned or examined. The poem has occasionally formed a touchstone for "national guilt," "collective mourning," "coming to terms with the past," and "reparation"—ideas that have preoccupied Germany since its Nazi period.

WHAT HAD it taken to draw such an utterance from a 23-year-old? Born in 1920 in Czernowitz, Bukovina, the eastern outpost of the Austrian Empire until World War I, Celan grew up in a German-speaking Jewish milieu, learning Hebrew for his bar mitzvah and Rumanian at school. He resisted his father's Orthodox and Zionist persuasion, but circumstances soon showed the boy how Jewish he was. In 1934 he wrote to an aunt who had emigrated to Palestine: "I could write a 300-page opus about anti-Semitism in our school." After the Hitler-Stalin pact, Russian forces occupied Czernowitz and "reformed" the university. Then in 1941, Nazi and Rumanian troops set about burning, plundering, torturing, murdering, deporting thousands of Jews. One night in June, 1942 the ghetto was swept. Celan, an only child, hid with friends, and the next morning found his house boarded up and his parents gone. That winter he learned that both his father and mother, brutally exhausted in a camp on the southern Bug River, had been shot by the S.S. Celan himself, after a year and a half shoveling rocks in southeast Rumania, barely escaped execution, fled to the Soviet Army, and eventually returned to Czernowitz.

There, in late summer, 1944, standing outside the iron grillwork of the archiepiscopal cathedral in his occupied homeland, he read *Todesfuge* to a friend who had survived with his family in the same camp where Celan's parents perished. What then did it take for an orphan to voice such annihilation in his mother tongue, in the murderers' tongue? The German language, he later said, had to "pass through its own answerlessnesses, pass through a frightful muting, pass through the thousand darknesses of deathbringing speech." Yet it was all he had left: only his language "remained in the midst of the losses."

If the war brought German literature to its *Nullpunkt*, to its degree zero, then survivors like Celan had an even starker *Nullpunkt*, and *Todesfuge* finds words for

John Felstiner teaches at Stanford University and is the author most recently of *Translating Neruda: The Way to Machu Picchu* (Stanford University Press).

that nullity. In 1944, relatives and friends were returning to Czernowitz from the camps, or not returning. He listened to horrifying stories. Perhaps if he had stayed with his parents in the ghetto and been deported to Transnistria, he could have saved them. Celan wrote *Todesfuge* in the first person, an intolerable yet obligatory voice: "we drink and we drink." "*Wir*" ("we") and "*uns*" ("us") occur twenty times in the poem, insisting that the victims be heard. The poet makes them speak, but, because they cannot speak, must speak for them.

What we know as *Todesfuge*, Celan originally entitled *Todestango*, "Tango of Death." In fact it was his first published poem, appearing not in German but in Petre Solomon's Rumanian translation, *Tangoul Mortii* (May 1947). Think of that sort of dance around black milk, graves, vipers, hounds, and you feel an added twist to Celan's irony. The tango fascinated Europe during his childhood, the late '20s and early '30s. To call *this* poem *Todestango* was to nullify everything in life that would be svelte, graceful, nonchalant.

Beneath the poem's stylized, cadenced lines and stunning metaphors, Celan had a matter of fact to build on. In the Janowska camp at Lemberg, Gali-

DEATHFUGUE

Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening
we drink it at midday and morning we drink it at night
we drink and we drink
we shovel a grave in the sky there it won't feel too cramped
A man lives in the house he plays with his vipers he writes
he writes when it turns dusk to Deutschland your golden hair Marguerite
he writes it and steps out of doors and the stars are all twinkling
he whistles his hounds to come close
he whistles his Jews into rows has them shovel a grave in the ground
he orders us strike up and play for the dance

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at morning and midday we drink you at evening
we drink and we drink
A man lives in the house he plays with his vipers he writes
he writes when it turns dusk to Deutschland your golden hair Marguerite
your ashen hair Shulamith we shovel a grave in the sky
there it won't feel too cramped
He shouts jab the earth deeper you there you others sing up and play
he grabs for the rod in his belt he swings it his eyes are blue
jab your spades deeper you there you others play on for the dance

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at midday and morning we drink you at evening
we drink and we drink
a man lives in the house your goldenes Haar Marguerite
your aschenes Haar Shulamith he plays with his vipers
He shouts play death more sweetly Death is a master from Deutschland
he shouts scrape your strings darker you'll rise then in smoke to the sky
you'll have a grave then in the clouds there it won't feel too cramped

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at midday Death is a master aus Deutschland
we drink you at evening and morning we drink and we drink
Death is ein Meister aus Deutschland his eye is blue
he shoots you with shot made of lead shoots you level and true
a man lives in the house your goldenes Haar Margarete
he looses his hounds on us grants us a grave in the air
he plays with his vipers and daydreams der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland

dein goldenes Haar Margarete
dein aschenes Haar Sulamith

PAUL CELAN
translated by John Felstiner

cia, not far from Czernowitz, an S.S. lieutenant ordered Jewish fiddlers to play a hit tango with a new refrain, called "Death Tango," during marches, tortures, grave-digging, executions. Before liquidating the camp, they shot all the orchestra. I've also seen a 1944 pamphlet on "The Lublin Extermination Camp" (i.e., Maidanek) by Konstantin Simonov, issued by Moscow's Foreign Languages Publishing House. In Russian-occupied Czernowitz, possibly Celan came across this pamphlet. Simonov recounts a mass death march toward the camp crematorium, endless columns five abreast, "holding each others' arms . . . Scores of loudspeakers began to emit the deafening strains of the fox-trot and the tango. And they blared all the morning, all day, all the evening, and all night."

"Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening/we drink it at midday and morning we drink it at night." These opening verses seem to hark back to Genesis—"and the evening and the morning were the first day"—so that Paul Celan's poem marks our century's anti-Creation. But it chastens imagination to hear, with Celan's ears, Simonov's 1944 account. Reality can swell to metaphorical excess and defy belief, as Celan's Rumanian editor recognized in 1947, advising his readership that *Tangoul Mortii* was "based upon data": in the Nazi camps, "some of the condemned were forced to play music while others dug graves." This prefatory caution against disbelief inaugurated the working history of Celan's poem.

Not long afterward he changed the title—a momentous change that has left readers shuttling between the poem's versification and its veracity. Having abandoned Czernowitz, Celan in Bucharest penciled out "*tango*" in a typescript of *Todestango* and substituted "*fuge*." Then in Vienna in 1948 he published his first book, setting apart *Todesfuge* as its concluding section. That change, from the Argentine dance to Bach's masterful complexity, has made all the difference. For though Celan's lines had all along formed a repetitive, overlapping, and dissonant counterpoint, to actually call them a fugue brought out their artfulness—however much he meant to bring out an inexorable force at work. In 1944, the classic form must have meant a frail stay against chaos. But all too soon *Todesfuge*'s musical construction, its play among verbal themes, diverted attention from the poem's real theme: that German fascism consummately orchestrated human annihilation.

PAUL CELAN BY WOLFGANG OSCHATZ

For twenty years *Todesfuge* figured as a cultural obsession in Germany, a more durable if somewhat less fiery obsession than Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*. Hundreds of reviews, essays, memoirs, dissertations, critical books, anthologies, and teachers' guides, not to mention countless school and university classes, have dealt with the poem since 1952, when Celan first published it in Germany. To sample those responses yields a kind of morality play, wherein Art and History, imagination and reality, jostle for precedence.

"His lyrics are *poésie pure*, magical montage . . . They have French sheen and Balkan glitter, the suggestiveness of the *chanson* and the modulations of melancholy. They exist wholly on metaphor . . . Reality is transposed in the secret script of poesy!" All this in 1953 from the Christian poet Heinz Piontek, who urged Celan to publish only when "he has something to say which is really pressing him—but not his *études* and finger exercises." You would never know that *Todesfuge* was the main piece in the volume under review, which Celan entitled *Mohn und Gedächtnis*, "Poppy and Memory." Another review that year praised the poem's "enchantment," "lyrical alchemy," "Zen Buddhist satori-experience," "clever technique and beautiful imagery"—"A Celan poem is wholly without intention. It wants to be nothing but breath, sound, image, effortless and almost singable . . . . Celan is a tender sculptor."

I imagine the poet at a newsstand in Paris, where he'd finally settled, looking this up in *Die Welt* and maybe having to remind himself what *Todesfuge* really said: "he whistles his hounds to come close/he whistles his Jews into rows has them shovel a grave in the ground." Not every critic was enchanted away from the death camps by this poem's musical virtuosity. But even those who acknowledged Celan's subject usually stressed the "pure play" of his language, its "sovereign inner reality," its "unbridled fantasy." A well-known poet and critic, Hans Egon Holthusen, writing for the influential monthly *Merkur* less than two years after *Todesfuge* was published, could say that it had "already become famous." But what had not hit home was the paradox embedded in Celan's surrealistic genitive, "Fugue of Death." Holthusen applauds the poet for "singing one of the most

ghastly and significant events in recent history . . . so that it escapes history's bloody chamber of horrors to rise into the ether of pure poetry." Who, I wonder, was really escaping?

With an ease that seemed indecent to Celan, *Todesfuge* was ensconced in anthologies during the '50s and, notably, in high school readers. Students would spend a few preliminary minutes on "content preparation," then go on assiduously to analyze the poem's prosody and structure. Having studied fugues in music class, they might each adopt a motif or voice to perform Celan's poem, "to make the polyphony audible"—with what effect, it's hard to know. One pedagogical journal does advise giving the class something historical first (but not about genocide—better Anne Frank's diary). And "the point is for this to happen before interpreting *Todesfuge*"—which seems reasonable enough, unless the point really is to get it all behind you, because "a consideration of *Todesfuge* could easily lapse into discussion of the persecution of the Jews."

Evidently Celan felt his own poem lapsing into a purely aesthetic niche. He insisted in 1958 that his poetry mistrusted "the 'melodiousness' which more or less untroubled still trips tunefully alongside the most frightful things." In Germany to accept the 1958 Bremen Prize, Celan made his speech show how desperate and purposive his writing was: "A poem can be a message in a bottle, sent out in the (not always greatly hopeful) belief that it may somewhere and sometime wash up on land." And that year he wrote to a critic: "For me what counts is truth, not euphony."

BY THE LATE '50s Celan's verse had shed its euphony, turning enigmatic and rhythmically constrained, its syntax ruptured from within by the pressure of unspeakable memory. In that vein he wrote a long sequel to *Todesfuge* which he called *Engführung* (1958), meaning "straitening," and also "stretto," the close overlap of voices at the end of a fugue:

Asche.
Asche, Asche.
Nacht.
Nacht-und-Nacht.

Here are the night and ashes of *Todesfuge*, now stripped of cadence and metaphor. Now only the narrowest art will do. Perhaps the earlier poem, despite its sarcasm about such German treasures as Heine's Lorelei, who "combs her golden hair"—perhaps *Todesfuge* did invite too congenial a reading. Nothing like it appears in Celan's lyrics during the '60s. They have instead a crystal cut and density that taxed (and dazzled) German readers.

FOR VARIOUS reasons Celan began turning down requests to anthologize *Todesfuge*, except for a 1960 collection of poetry on the Nazi years with *"Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland"* as epigraph. For one thing, he saw his hard-bought metaphors (the black milk, the grave in the clouds) too readily appreciated. Even Rolf Hochhuth, speculating on how to portray the horror of Auschwitz, remarked that *Todesfuge*'s "masterly" metaphors actually acted as a screen. And Celan reportedly told someone in 1966, "I don't musicalize anymore, as at the time of the much-touted *Todesfuge*, which by now has been threshed out in many a textbook." At the same time, he was suffering from a groundless, drawn-out plagiarism charge which the German press helped publicize. This campaign rubbed his nerves raw to whatever neo-Nazism and recrudescent anti-Semitism he perceived, and he shrank from being anthologized alongside German poets who had behaved dubiously during the war.

One nettle in particular afflicted Celan and clung to *Todesfuge* during the '50s and '60s. In 1951 and again in 1955 the German-Jewish sociologist Theodor Adorno, after years of refuge in the United States, published an essay containing the remark that has remained his most famous: *"Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch,"* "After Auschwitz, to write a poem is barbaric." Then in a 1962 radio talk, published in 1965, he repeated that sentence and explained: "Through the aesthetic principle of stylization . . . an unimaginable fate still seems as if it had some meaning; it becomes transfigured, with something of the horror removed." Critics began applying this stricture to *Todesfuge*—not really, Celan thought, because the poem prettified Jewish suffering, but because it affronted German guilt. Soon Adorno's dictum was generally taken to refer to *Todesfuge*. The culminating insult came when a 1965 *Merkur* article questioned poetry not merely after but about Auschwitz: Celan's *Todesfuge* and its motifs, "all of them thoroughly composed in an elegant score—didn't that show far too much pleasure in art, in despair turned 'beautiful' through art?"

The poet who had his parents wrenched away overnight, and who barely survived eighteen months' forced labor, felt especially injured when German critics charged him with eliciting aesthetic pleasure from Auschwitz. A 1966 letter of Celan's mentions the *Merkur*, saying "now one finally knows where the barbarians are to be found." But in this case Adorno was not exactly responsible for his disciples. His first essay had been written originally in 1949, when he hadn't even heard of Celan. *"Nach Auschwitz . . ."* did not refer to *Todesfuge*, and Adorno's editor Rolf Tiedemann tells me that it was Celan's poetry itself which led Adorno in 1966 to recant specifically his famous dictum. Toward the end of his life, Adorno intended to write an essay on *Engführung*. He considered Celan the only authentic postwar writer to stand with Beckett.

DURING THE LATE '60s, more readers began hearing the bitter irony in *Todesfuge*. A 1968 East German collection on the persecution of the Jews included the poem, which also appeared in Germany's most popular school reader. Other critics harped on the usual themes. "Doesn't he reduce death," asked one man, "to a harmless wood-carving?" Another, seemingly sympathetic to Celan's later verse, called *Todesfuge* in 1970 "all too rhetorical." That same year a teachers' journal discovered in the syntax of *Todesfuge* "grief for the hangman," for "the victim of a system," and suggested that the poem's close—your golden hair Marguerite/your ashen hair Shulamith—couples the German and the Jewish ideals in "forgiveness," in a "loving meeting," rather than in the unresolvable chord that turns Shulamith to ashes. Celan's closing couplet, this article says, may also "recall to us the close of *Faust*": "the eternal feminine/draws us upward."

Celan was spared, as it happens, from contemplating these notions. By 1970, after treatments in a Paris mental hospital, he was living apart from his wife and son. He had visited Israel gratefully, yet he seemed reluctant to face its messianic demand. In March 1970 he had been let down sharply by an audience at the Hölderlin bicentena-

69
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ry. In April he drowned himself in the Seine. Left on his desk was a biography of Hölderlin with a sentence underscored: "Sometimes this genius darkens and sinks into the bitter well of his heart."

SINCE PAUL CELAN'S death the work of understanding has intensified in Germany and America, and has helped to move *Todesfuge* beyond its author's misgivings about the poem as an aesthetic diversion. Recently a set of "poetic testimony on deportation and annihilation" was titled *Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland*. A West German Marxist has defended the poem, warning lest nowadays it be replaced in textbooks by mannered, subjective lyrics. German classes do still study it, paying more or less attention to the history, the memory, that compelled Celan to write.

I know more than a dozen English translations (and four Hebrew) of *Todesfuge*, from Michael Bullock, Clement Greenberg, and Jerome Rothenberg in the '50s to Christopher Middleton, Joachim Neugroschel, Michael Hamburger, and others. Still I see some point in attempting a new version, to keep on reaching for that message in a bottle. Every phrase, practically every word in this poem, broaches questions for the translator. What do you do, for instance, with *Meister*—a god, a champion, a "master race," skilled craftsman, Wagner's *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (which itself points to the 1935 Nuremberg laws and the postwar trials), a labor-camp overseer, a musical maestro, a rabbi? How do you convey the poem's overtones of Luther's Genesis, the Song of Songs, Jeremiah, Goethe, Heine? Through them alone, *Todesfuge* implies an indictment of Western, so-called Judeo-Christian culture.

I have taken the chance a fugue offers to render this poem gradually back toward Celan's original German, toward the mother tongue that was all he had left. I've refrained completely from translating *Deutschland*, because it's familiar enough to us in song and story and occurs simply this once in all Celan's poetry. In translating I also go back longingly again and again to Celan's own recorded voice—he read with "a cold heat," one friend said—to feel his rhythms, pauses, emphases, intense retards, caustic articulation, and even one excited mistake when he comes to "jab the earth deeper . . . sing up and play."

To approach *Todesfuge* in class, in these days of the war's long aftermath, I begin by playing a brief section from Bach's *Art of the Fugue*. (Did the camp orchestra have to play this? Did the commandant relax to it after work?) I play Bach first so as to steepen the irony the poem will bring, to make that irony more nearly intolerable. But the harpsichord's sinuous needle threadings wind their way and the music grows too good to stop. I should shut off the phonograph and start, "Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening." I can't. Why not let this music go on and on—two minutes, five minutes, the entire hour—and give us nothing but the piercing art of the fugue?